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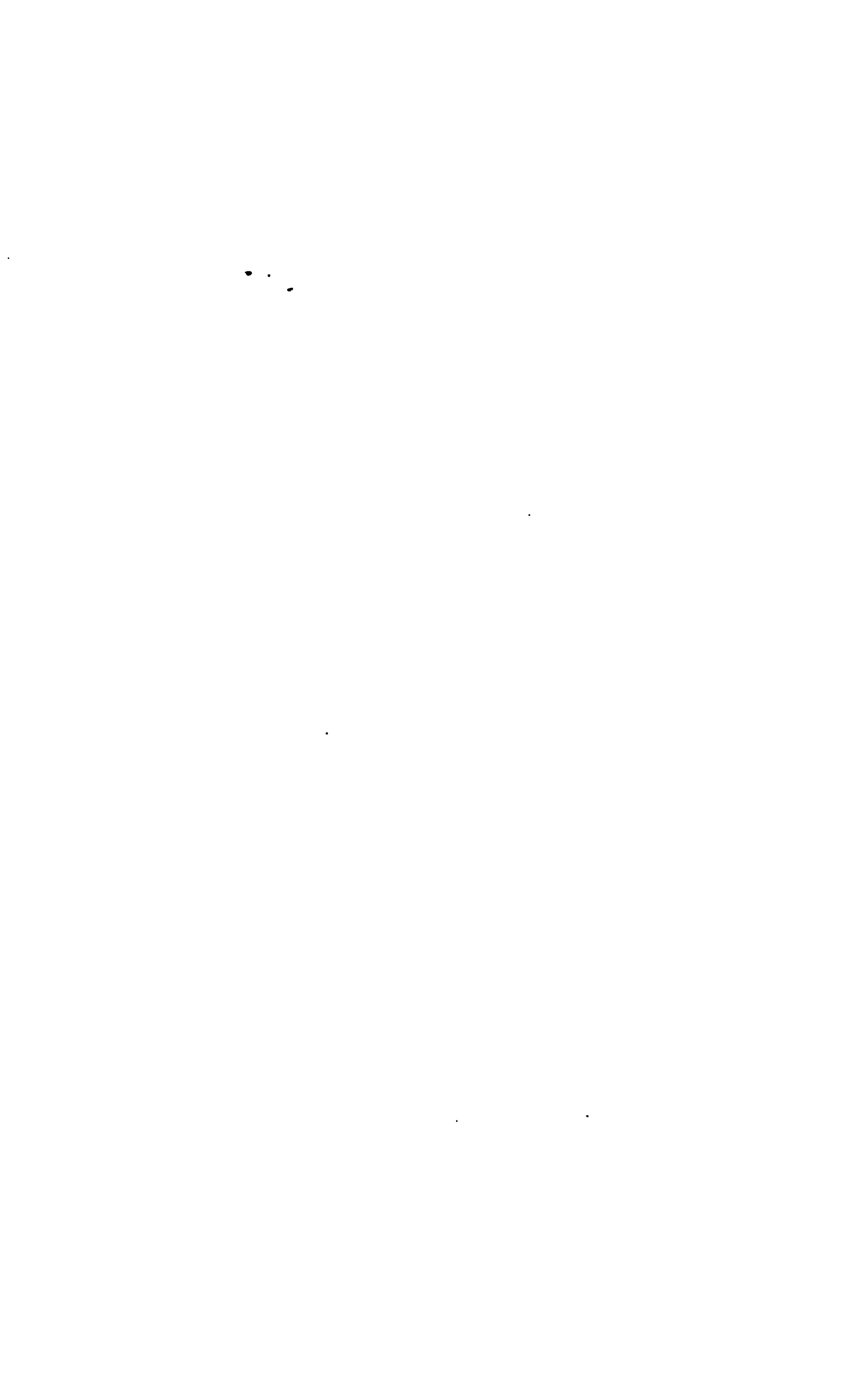
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THE  
SHERBRO AND ITS HINTERLAND

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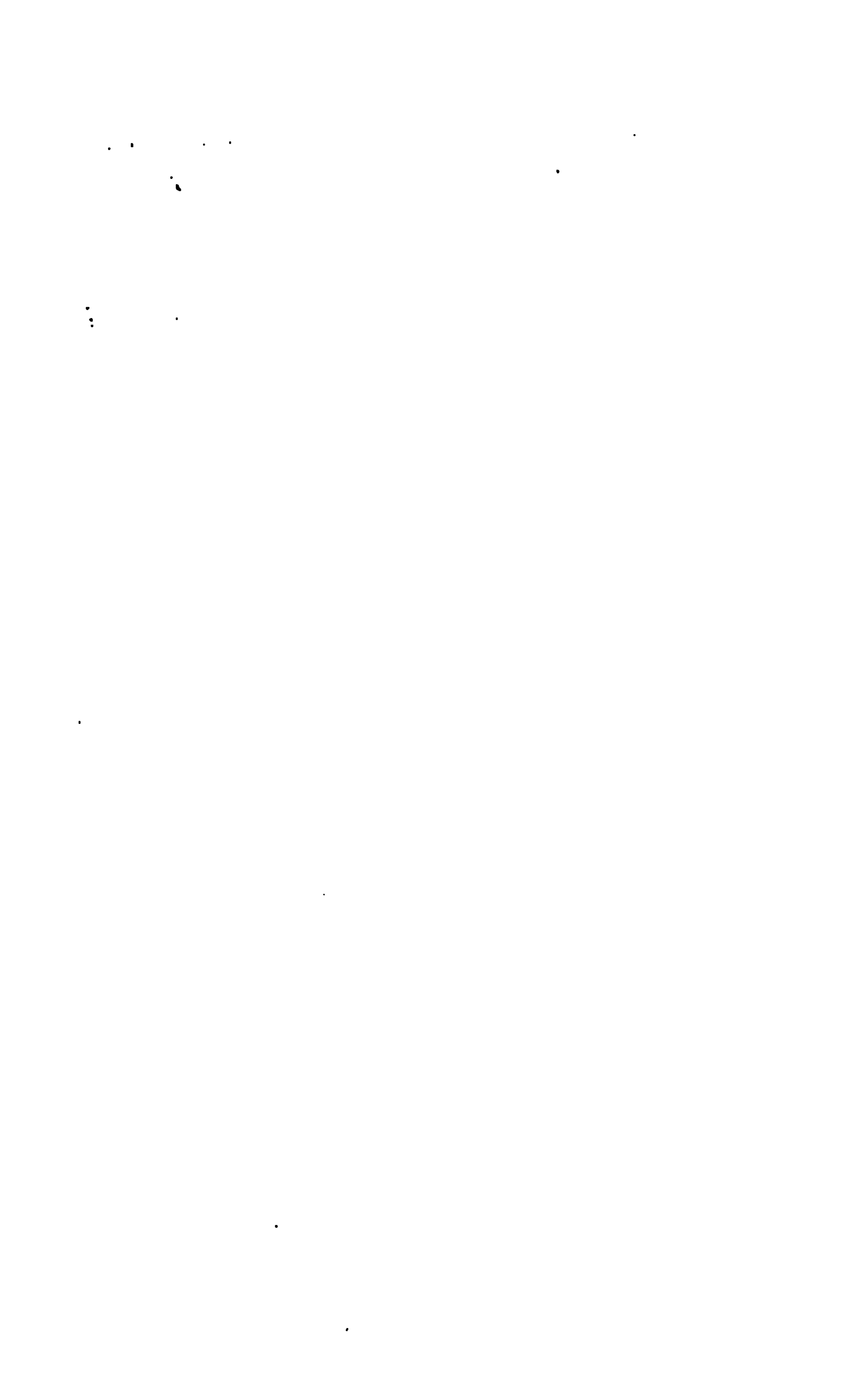


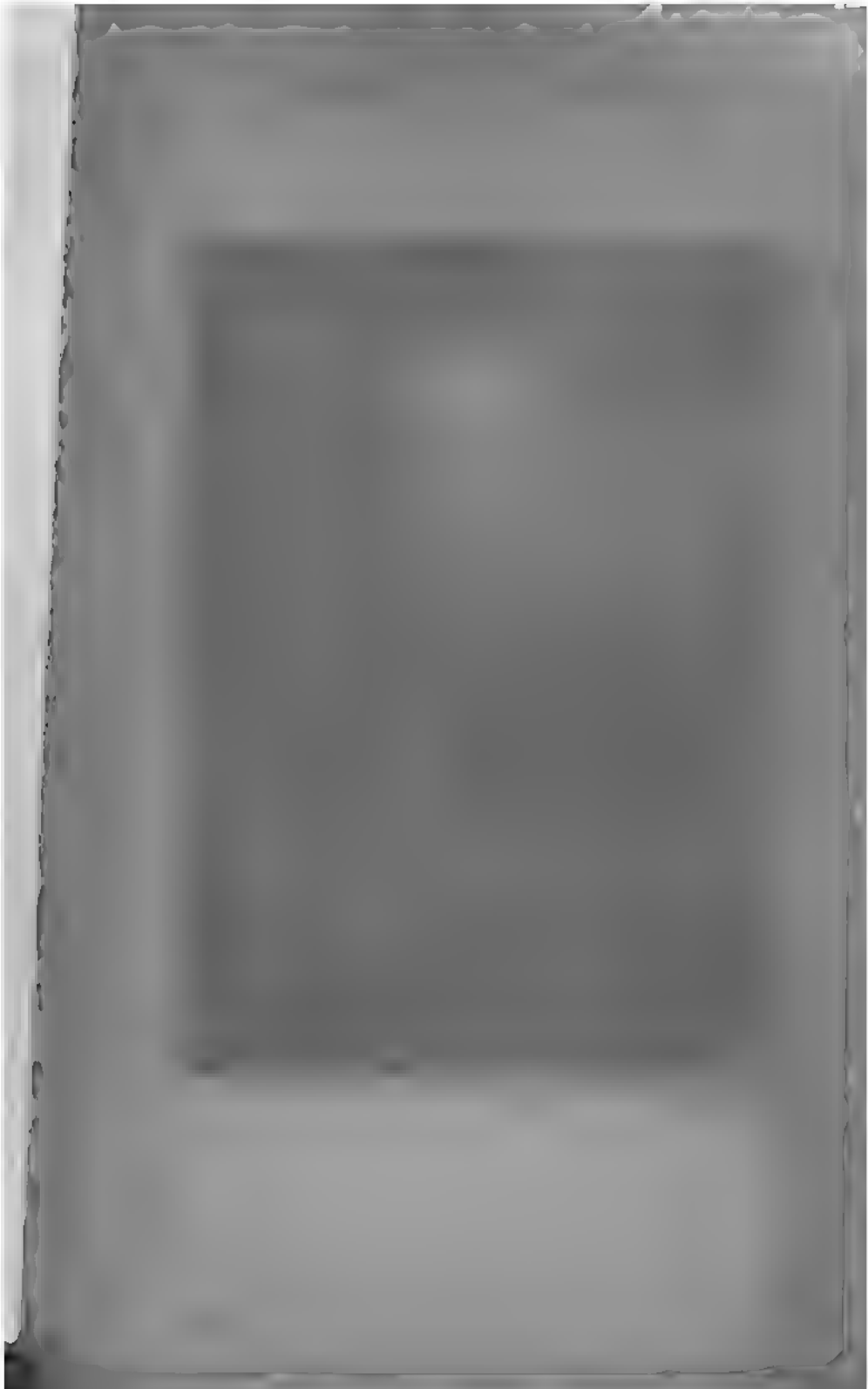


*From a Photograph by J. Thomson.]*

*[Frontispiece.*

T. J. ALLDRIDGE, F.R.G.S.





THE SHERBRO  
AND  
ITS HINTERLAND

BY

T. J. ALLDRIDGE, F.R.G.S.  
*District Commissioner, Sherbro, West Coast of Africa*

London

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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

THIS BOOK UPON

THE SHERBRO AND ITS HINTERLAND

IS BY SPECIAL PERMISSION RESPECTFULLY

**Dedicated**



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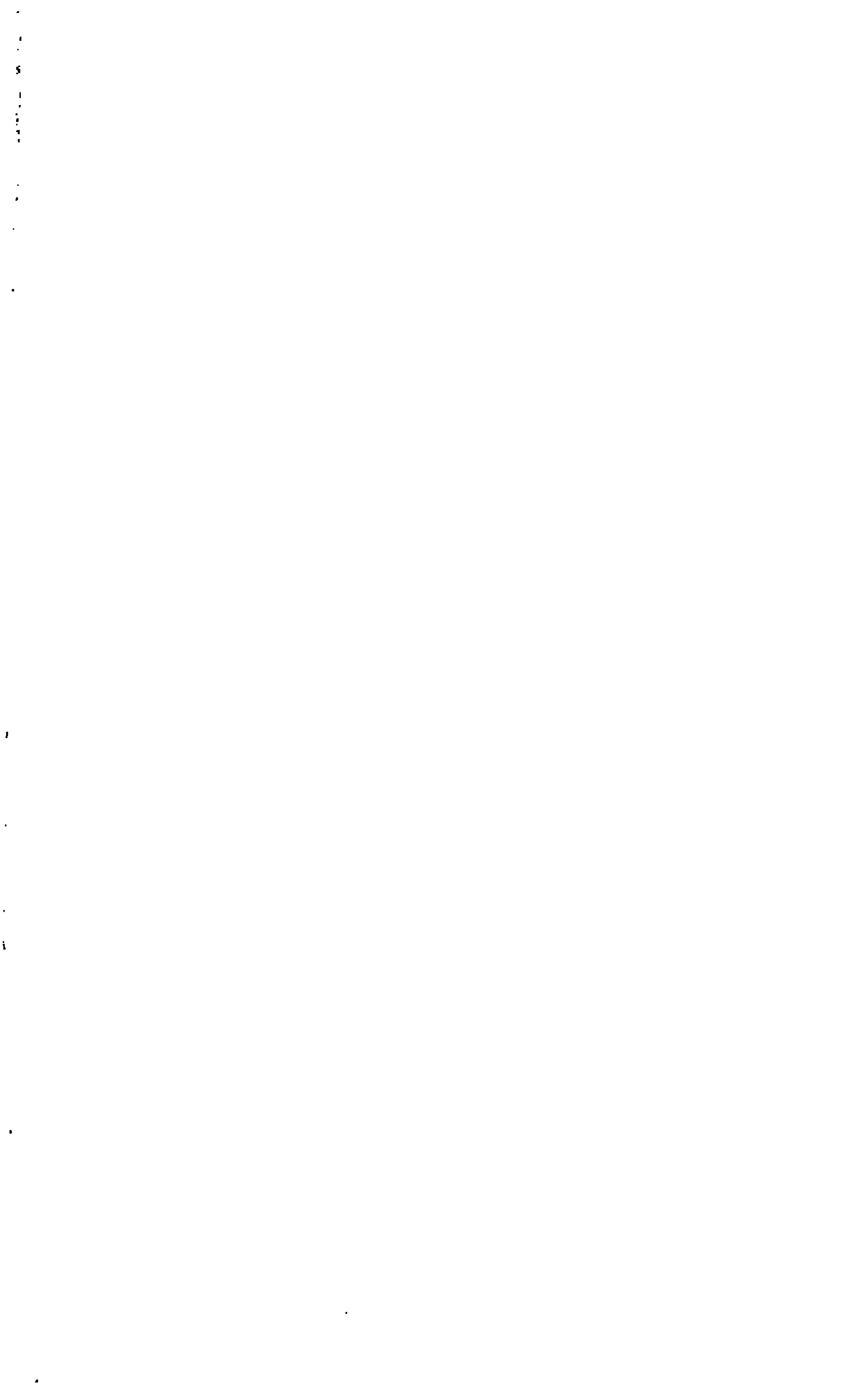
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MAP SHOWING THE AUTHOR'S ROUTES IN THE HINTER-  
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MAP OF SIERRA LEONE, COMPILED IN THE INTELLIGENCE  
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# THE SHERBRO AND ITS HINTERLAND

## CHAPTER I

### THE COLONY OF SIERRA LEONE

“ YOU are stationed at Old Calabar, are you not? Then I suppose you often walk up to Sierra Leone and back again on Sunday afternoons?”

This was said in England by an English clergyman to a friend of mine who had just returned from the West Coast of Africa. Now the distance between Old Calabar and Sierra Leone is roughly about twelve hundred miles. Double that would make a very nice little walk, under the broiling sun of a tropical Sunday afternoon, and one calculated to render the man who took it remarkably fit for his work on Monday morning!

Old Calabar is in Southern Nigeria. Between this port and Sierra Leone are Lagos, the German Colony of Togoland, French Dahomey, and other French Colonies, the Gold Coast and the Negro Republic of Liberia.

I begin with this little anecdote because it illustrates so graphically the very hazy ideas of African geography

current in England, even among the fairly educated. Many people, for instance, in speaking to me of Sierra Leone, assume its position to be in South Africa, and ask me how far it is from the seat of the South African war ; while, as a matter of fact, Sierra Leone is about midway between England and the Cape of Good Hope.

Very vague, too, are the notions that cluster round the term "The West Coast of Africa." Geographically, the whole seaboard right away from the Straits of Gibraltar down to the Cape of Good Hope is the west coast ; but what is commercially known as the West Coast extends only from Senegal to the Oil Rivers, a distance of about 1,800 miles. This West Coast is politically divided among four governments: the British, German, French and Liberian.

Of the British West African Colonies Sierra Leone is the oldest. Originally it was the seat of government for the whole of British West Africa. It was founded as a Colony, and not, like the other settlements, as a mere trading station.

In 1787 it was ceded to Great Britain by the native chiefs, at the time of the emancipation of the West Indian negroes, when it became a refuge for liberated slaves.

The Colony of Sierra Leone is fairly well known to the British public ; as for the last hundred years or so it has enjoyed the reputation of being "the white man's grave."

Sierra Leone itself, however, is not my subject. My aim is, in these pages, to bring before the reader that part of the Colony called the Sherbro and its rich Hinterland. The Sherbro is a great revenue-producing country, of vital importance to Sierra Leone, but which is practi-

cally unknown outside the official circle and the West African section of the London, Liverpool and Manchester mercantile world.

The Sherbro lies to the south-east of Freetown, the capital of the Colony.

Bonthe, the seat of the Sherbro Government, is ninety miles by sea from Freetown. Bonthe is on the Sherbro Island, the largest of a number of little islands forming a small archipelago. Some of these isles are inhabited, others are merely desolate mangrove swamps.

The arm of the sea between Sherbro and the mainland is locally, although erroneously, called the Sherbro River. This river comes to an end at the sea bar, pronounced Shebar, a narrow opening into the Atlantic.

Beyond the low-lying coast of the mainland is the Hinterland, which within the last few years has been created a British Protectorate and divided into five districts: Karene, Koinadugu, Panguma, Ronietta and Bandajuma. Only the last mentioned, with parts of Panguma and Ronietta, affect the Sherbro, the others lie in a different direction. The names of these new districts are as yet unfamiliar to the British public.

The district of Sherbro, it must be distinctly understood, is part of the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone; but it is also the trading centre for the adjoining Protectorate, and extends from the Turtle Islands to the Liberian boundary.

Sherbro is a port of entry; the anchorages being off York Island and also off Bomplake Point near to Bonthe.

Ocean-going steamers come in to Sherbro from Liverpool and the continent of Europe to deliver cargo and receive produce.

In the Sherbro are large trading establishments, both European and native. These establishments are called "trading factories," and all of them have branches up the numerous rivers that run down from the interior into the Sherbro River. These great rivers are the natural highways of commerce to and from the interior as far as they are navigable; unfortunately, after comparatively short distances, they become unnavigable on account of the rocky nature of their beds.

Sherbro has another great natural and commercial advantage as the shipping port of the rich Hinterland: it is available all the year round. Its merchants are consequently not compelled to keep those enormous stocks both of merchandise and produce that would be necessary were their establishments upon a surf-beaten coast, where shipping is only possible at certain seasons.

During the dries Sulima and Mano Salija, also ports of entry within the Sherbro district, but at the boundary of the British and Liberian territories, are accessible for import and export. But this is impossible during the rainy season, owing to the unworkable surf, as will be seen by the illustration (Figure 1).

The rainy season is, however, a very busy one, as all the rivers being then swollen they are navigable much further inland than at other times; but at Sherbro proper, trade, as I have just said, goes on all the year round; yet even there it is brisker during the rains.

Every kind of craft, from steam launches, schooners and large canoes, down to little "dug-outs" that can only hold a couple of bushels, are to be seen crowding the Sherbro factory wharves, and I have known as much as £1,200 worth of native produce to be lying off one



Fig. 1.—THE SURF AT SULIMA, SHERBRO DISTRICT.



[To face page 4

Fig. 2.—A YOUNG MANGROVE SWAMP AT LOW TIDE, SHERBRO. (Page 27.)



factory at one time ; the river frontage being then simply a mass of all kinds of craft. In this case it was the oil palm that had provided every one of these cargoes. The value of the different lots was as various as the craft in which they were brought down, ranging from £150 to 5s.

The first great extension of British territory in the Sierra Leone Colony began in 1860 with the cession of the Sherbro by the native chiefs to his Excellency the late Sir Stephen Hill, who was then Governor. In 1883, under Governor Sir A. E. Havelock, the chiefs ceded, for fiscal purposes only, the remainder of the seaboard as far as the Mano River, which delimits the British and Liberian territories. But although we possessed this coast-line it was merely a fringe, our jurisdiction inland being practically nothing. Beyond this fringe, the country, to which the general term of Mendiland is now given, was ruled entirely by the native chiefs, who were continually carrying on war with each other, principally for the purpose of slave raiding. This raiding not only devastated the country, but prevented the expansion of trade, and consequently of revenue, as, when war was going on, the natives could neither bring down produce nor venture to take imported goods inland. This was a most serious state of things, that called loudly for British intervention. It was therefore resolved, during the very able administration of Sir James Shaw Hay, K.C.M.G. (1888—91), to adopt a firm and greatly extended policy for the interior.

The first steps taken were the appointment of two travelling Commissioners, the late Mr. G. Garrett, F.R.G.S., and myself, and the establishment of a Frontier Police Force.



In the course of this volume I hope to trace some of the steps by which this policy was carried out, as well as to show some of the results already obtained, which, to those who knew the Hinterland before the intervention of the Government, appear as marvellous as they are beneficent.

In the bad old times the most cruel oppression prevailed; the native slave-trade was in full force; the internecine wars that had been going on between the chiefs from time immemorial were as frequent as ever; and there was a total lack of all civilised law and order. The task before the Government was herculean; to those acquainted with the true state of things in the Hinterland, it appeared indeed to border on the superhuman; and yet in a few short years that great task has been so far accomplished as to make the British power felt, and felt for good, as it was never felt or even known before.

It is true that after several years of tribal peace, the result of the Friendly Treaties between the paramount chiefs and the Government, a discontent culminated in 1898 in a rising, in which many persons both European and natives lost their lives. This has been erroneously attributed both in England and in Sierra Leone to the introduction of the Protectorate Ordinance and the putting a trifling tax upon houses.

Those entertaining such views had perhaps not realised that it was to the Government, and the Government alone, that the peoples of the Sherbro and its Hinterland owed the security to life and property that they had enjoyed since 1890.

I allude here to the people in general and to those petty chiefs and head-men of small villages who before that time

had never known when they might be pounced upon by the surrounding chiefs, their places sacked and burned, and their people and themselves carried off into slavery. Many a time when I have been passing through the up-country villages on the tours described in these pages, people have come out and prostrated themselves before me, thanking the Government for what it had done for them. Nothing, I think, could convince one more of their sincerity than the spontaneous remark that "beforetime they did not care to plant, because they never knew whether they would be there to eat the crops." For years a great and increasing expenditure has been incurred in the maintenance of the Native Frontier Police Force. The area of the Sherbro Protectorate is very considerable, compelling from time to time an augmentation in the strength of the Force; but towards the up-keep of this force, to whom the Hinterland folk were indebted for their safety, these people had not contributed one penny in direct taxation.

Their country is rich in indigenous production, much of which is absolutely wasted, labour is well paid, most of the produce realises fair prices, and imported goods have never before been so cheap as they are now, so that the people are generally well able to pay the small tax imposed upon them, and in cases where it is found to be oppressive the Governor can remit it entirely.

In the Sherbro district itself, which is within the Colony proper, the tax is not to form part of the Colonial revenue, but to be expended solely upon improvements within the district. The tax, however, was first collected only in the October of last year—1900, so that there has not yet been time for improvements to be set on foot. But when the people come to realise for themselves the great benefits

they derive from this small tax, I am persuaded that they will soon learn to appreciate the efforts the Government are making to better their condition: for, notwithstanding the rising, the gigantic task accomplished by the Government during the past ten or twelve years has taken firm hold on the native mind. The rising was by no means a spontaneous effort on the part of the general native community, but may be traced to the enormous influence fetish, or "Country Medicine," has upon the people. It was by means of this fetish that the majority of the Sherbro people were compelled, *nolens volens*, to join the rebels. Towns and villages whose inhabitants knew absolutely nothing of what was going on, were suddenly invaded by war-boys with the Yuyira Poro or "one word" medicine, and had either to swear upon the medicine and join in the rising or submit to be killed.

As a matter of fact, when the chiefs of the countries behind Sulima informed the people that there would be no more English law, they were so much frightened that many of them, fearing that they would be taken back into slavery, crossed the Mano river and sought refuge in Liberian territory; nor could they be induced to return until they knew that the rising had been quelled and retribution meted out to the rebels.

This act of theirs is enough of itself to show the dread the people have of again coming under country law without the supervision of the British Government.

## CHAPTER II

### A SHERBRO FACTORY

As the steamer from Freetown approaches Sherbro Island, the passenger notices several dark objects rising apparently out of the sea, which objects presently resolve themselves into the tops of tall trees, for so low-lying is the island that its tree-tops are seen before the land itself is visible.

As the channel narrows, the vessel steams between monotonous banks of mangrove mile after mile, until at length it anchors awhile in mid-stream two miles from Bonthe. Here from the deck the traveller gets, as an agreeable variation, a very pretty and picturesque view of Bonthe, on the island, with its shipping, its line of European and native factories, its town, its churches, its native fakais—or villages, and, more characteristic than all besides, its cocoanut trees and its palms, all seen in the brilliant light of the tropics.

The steamer may go on to York Island, where there is a similar view on a somewhat smaller scale. Life in both places is much the same; but Bonthe is the seat of Government for the whole of the Sherbro district. Originally it was all mangroves, but a very large clearing

has been made, in which a considerable town has been placed—fronted along the river line by factories.

It has always been a mystery to me why a trading station where nothing is made should be called a "factory"; but it is so, and every trading station on the West African Coast or up the rivers is known simply by that term.

Now, a West African factory is merely a *depôt* to which produce is brought by the natives, and imported goods by British and Continental steamers. When situated on the bank of a river where steamers anchor, it is an establishment for trading in all its branches. Its owners purchase the products of the country, store them pending an opportunity for shipment, receive and store imported goods, which they sell to the natives for cash or barter as the case may be. A factory may be a great trading centre at the port of entry, or a mere mud hut with a mud shed on the pettiest up-river place; but, large or small, it is always a trading establishment and never a manufactory. All the same, the name "Factory," used as I am to it in the West African sense, still seems to me an anomaly, especially as applied to the little up-river shanties.

I will now describe one of the largest European factories at the shipping port of Sherbro. There is first a good wooden dwelling-house, raised about four feet from the ground upon brick pillars, this open part being called the cellar—another anomaly which is perhaps purely climatic. These houses have generally but one floor, and in fact may aptly be termed large bungalows. Around the house is a broad verandah, either open or enclosed by *jalousie* blinds; ventilation is the chief object, and windows and doors are very numerous.

The roof is of corrugated iron ; so during the wet season the noise of the heavy rains beating upon the metal is more than deafening, and can only be rightly appreciated by those who have experienced it. During a tornado it is no infrequent thing to see these sheets of iron being whirled in the air.

In the dries too it attracts the heat until the house becomes insufferable. This may in a measure be remedied by covering the iron roof with bamboo thatching ; but that is considered to spoil the appearance of these handsome houses, which, in spite of the corrugated iron, are not without a certain picturesqueness, set as they often are amidst a profusion of tropical vegetation. The quarters of the native servants and the kitchens are usually built away from the house.

Sometimes the trading store may form the lower part of the house, but more frequently it is a separate building. In the compound there will be several good strong sheds for the reception of palm kernels, rice and other native produce ; also separate stores for dry goods, hardware, spirits and tobacco.

There is a cooper's open shed for putting together oil casks, which are shipped out usually in bundles of staves called shooks, and with a sufficiency of hoop iron. A native cooper makes them up into butts for the receiving of palm oil ; each butt usually containing about 170 imperial gallons. Inside this shed are also fires with large iron caldrons for boiling the oil ; the whole compound is fenced in, the principal entrance facing the river. A short pier runs out from the bank, at the end of which is a crane for loading and discharging heavy goods from schooners and lighters, the small canoes and boats coming

right up along shore. The factories are practically run by the agents of British or Continental firms, and, taking one thing with another, the agent's life is not a happy one. The fever-proof, argus-eyed automaton agent has unfortunately not yet been discovered ; therefore at present its work has to be done by a simple human being who is sometimes sick, has only one pair of eyes, and can hardly manage to do more than a hundred things at once.

This mere man has indeed a hard time ; he seldom gets a night's rest ; frequently has to work on Sundays when shipping cargo demands it ; and devoted as he may be to the interests of his firm, it is quite possible he may now and then get an upsetting letter, which, as his nerves at the best suffer badly from the climate, it takes a long while to get over.

Perhaps his principals, who live in London, Liverpool, Manchester, or elsewhere in Europe, have not themselves visited the coast, and so hardly understand the conditions under which their agent lives, consequently do not always recognise the great efforts he makes to work their business successfully in this most trying and pestilential climate at a minimum of expense.

I have for years watched the efforts of agents of every class, and it seems to be most desirable that principals of European firms should know a good agent when they are fortunate enough to have one, and that they should consider his interests as carefully as he studies theirs. There may be a feeling in some mercantile circles that there are "as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it ;" but my own experience is that a good West Coast agent who can stand the climate fairly, has a local acquaintance with the natives and their special modes of trading, and can, more-

over, get on with them, cannot be found in five minutes, and that when he has been found he should be estimated, from every point of view, at his proper value.

Cheapness here is not economy, for on this coast the inferior tool will turn out very inferior work.

Much is often said about drink ; but from my own observation I have come to the conclusion that, as a rule, a well-paid agent, who feels the responsibility of his position, does not drink more than is good for him.

The day's work begins at six, but the labourers arrive a little before and receive their rice, which they send to their wives to prepare for them. At ten they knock off work for the breakfast hour. After breakfast, the bell calls in the labourers and staff, and business goes on briskly until five, when it ceases for the day, except when export shipping is going on, when work may be prolonged until midnight. Every factory has from one to four night-watchmen. In the latter case two are inside the fence and two outside. Every hour throughout the night it is the duty of the yard watchman to strike the hour upon the bell. Ship's time by bells is not kept, but the full hour in twos is struck, so for 12 o'clock there are six pairs of twos. It is the duty of the outside watchman to look after canoes coming in with produce during the night, and to render assistance to the occupants. As I have said, the chief article of export is palm kernels ; a single firm will sometimes ship to a steamer, lying perhaps two miles off, as much as 500 tons. To do this in crafts of from ten to forty tons burthen will naturally require a great many trips ; and these trips can only be made when the tide serves, so that to ship from 100 to 150 tons in twenty-four hours is good work. Of course there may be



other firms shipping at the same time ; and then, with all this work going on, the scene on the river is a very lively one.

The palm nuts have to be carried from the store to the pier and thrown into the lighters ; to do this practically all the country boys and girls from the fakais about are hired by the agents of the factories at a shilling a day. These children, to use the local phrase, " tut " the " banga " (carry the palm kernels). One agent may employ fifty or sixty of these children, who continuously walk between the store and the wharf, carrying baskets known as " blies," full of palm kernels upon their heads, and no clothing on their dusky bodies. A lighter being loaded is anchored out, empty ones take its place, and the work is continued until the tide answers, when the lighters are taken alongside the steamer and discharged, returning for further loads. A great many of the native men are permanently employed in the factories as labourers, measurers, boatmen and canoe men. All the large firms, as I have already said, have branch factories in the various rivers, so that their craft are always carrying up goods and bringing down loads of produce ; and as a great many fine schooners are employed, it is a very pretty sight to see them come sailing along under a big stretch of canvas. The names of the native labourers who have become somewhat anglicised are, to say the least, quaint. Amongst the most common are " Two Shillings," " One Shilling," " Bottle of Beer," " Two Copper," " John Bull," " Frying Pan," " Rope Yarn," " Fine Boy," and " Black Man Trouble."

I once heard two women call to a labourer who rejoiced in the name of " Love and Kindness."

" Do, Love and Kindness, make you come and carry we load for we."

“Love and Kindness” at once came up beaming. His name must have been appropriate, for he immediately put the load upon his head, and the three went off together. Palm oil is brought down in the most heterogeneous collection of receptacles, everything that will contain it being requisitioned. I have seen it in gin bottles, rum demi-johns, of all sizes from half a gallon up to three or four ; calabashes, iron pots, from half a gallon up to twenty ; baby canoes, kegs, barrels, puncheons, butts, and any thing else that came to hand. When the palm oil is taken to a factory for sale, all small quantities are turned into the boiling pot and boiled, any water sinking to the bottom ; and where there is any suspicion of water or dirt being mixed with the oil in the larger quantities, that too is boiled ; because, unfortunately, natives have a bad practice of adulterating the oil by the addition of water and extraneous matter, and when Sherbro oil is sold in Liverpool there is an allowance to the buyer of two per cent. for impurities.

Palm kernels have to be very carefully dealt with ; good kernels may be mixed with old and hollow ones, and there may be a great deal of shell, which of course is useless. A common method to detect bad kernels is to turn them into great casks containing water, when the good solid ones sink to the bottom, and the worthless ones float on the surface. I have seen many basketsful detected, and removed in this way even from a two-ton quantity of kernels : so that an agent has always to be on the alert, and for ever inspecting the produce that is brought to his factory. As the kernels are brought in and deposited at the door of the palm kernel store the various heaps lying about representing different

owners, they are measured in a zinc or wooden Colonial bushel, which should contain sixty-eight pounds of dry kernels; after measuring they are thrown into the store; and as kernels, if at all wet, become very hot and develop a bloom, it is necessary that they should be constantly turned, which is done by men who use wooden shovels, to prevent cutting the kernels, otherwise they lose in weight. In good seasons native grown rice is largely purchased in three forms—the rough or paddy rice, Walker or parboiled semi-cleaned rice, and clean rice. Of course the price varies very considerably for each, as it is reckoned that it takes at least two bushels of rough rice to make one of clean, and the work of cleaning a lot of rice is very laborious, and falls to the lot of the women. When storing large quantities of Walker and clean rice it is customary to mix with it a lot of the small red bird's eye country-grown pepper as a preventative against weevils. The produce being received, the question of payment then arises—a receipt, known locally as a "good note," is given to the seller, with the quantity delivered and the amount he is to receive stated upon it, which he takes to the retail store for payment. This he can have either in cash or in goods, or part in cash and part in goods. A standard price is fixed by the merchants for all produce for cash and for goods. If the price for palm kernels is 4s. 6d. for goods, for cash it would be only 4s. It is quite optional with the seller to sell for whatever payment he likes—for cash or barter. A large trading store might be said to contain everything, from a needle to an anchor; Manchester cotton goods, German spirits and American tobacco predominating. Thousands of cases of gin are imported monthly into the Sherbro as well as vast quantities of demi-johns

of rum ; notwithstanding this my own experience is that it does not penetrate into the country any considerable distance from the navigable heads of waterways, the consumption being practically confined to a few miles inland. Still enormous quantities are consumed, and it is rare for a native to receive his pay without spirits of some kind or in some quantity being included ; because even the largest firms will sell either a single bottle of gin or a thousand cases. The price of a case of gin, containing twelve small bottles, is I believe 6s. As the duty upon this is 3s. a gallon, even suppose this case to contain only one gallon, there does not appear to be a large margin left for first cost, freight and expenses. Some of this liquor is said to be warranted to kill at a hundred yards. How true this may be I am not prepared to say, but I remember some years ago, a native going into a store in Sherbro and saying to the agent : " Massa, you bin get any of that same rum you bin get last week ? I want for buy some." The agent replied : " The rum was good, aye ? Yes, I get em ; but what make you ask if de rum de same one ? " " Why, Massa, my friend bin come here, he bin buy some of that rum, he bin drink one bottle, one time—that time he finish drink em, he fall down and he dun die ; so I sabbe de rum tronger for true, that make I want for get em." How far the native was drawing upon his imagination I do not know, or whether he drew upon it at all ; but I was certainly present and overheard the conversation. In these stores also may be purchased biscuits in barrels, corned beef, corned pork, nails of every description, clay pipes, tar, pitch, paints of all kinds, kerosene oil, candles of various kinds, soap, ropes, oars, rowlocks, imported boards, scantlings,

felt, canned provisions of all sorts, wines, Old Tom, sugar, ladies' fancy hats, pyjama suits, hardware of every description, lamps, manufactured tobacco, American leaf tobacco in hogsheads, perfumes, pomatum, and anything and everything that one can give a name to.

The native having taken the value of his good note, and received his goods, he next proceeds to have them carried down to his craft at the wharf. It is really a pier, but locally any waterside place at a factory, whether there is a pier or not, is termed the wharf. A canoe is said to have anchored at the wharf, whether on the bank or alongside the pier. His trading may have been half a bushel of palm nuts brought in a little dug-out, or it may be ten or twenty tons brought by some small sailing craft. No quantity is too small or too large for these great mercantile houses. In Sherbro, where the trade is now so brisk owing to the Governmental pacification of the interior, the place is very busy, and it is sometimes an extraordinary sight to see the quantity of craft of every kind around these wharves, and the life which prevails in their loading and discharging, and the great activity within the factory compound; but there is still ample scope for expansion of trade with further development of the country and increased means of overland transport. Blocks of green boxes of gin may be seen here, pyramidal heaps of wicker demi-johns of rum stacked there, quantities of three-legged iron cauldrons in another part; small piles of highly-coloured prints, Madras handkerchiefs, blue baft somewhere else; hogsheads or half hogsheads of tobacco being briskly rolled about; the din of coopers fastening on hoops to the oil casks; native store-keepers rushing here, there, and everywhere under the watchful

eyes of the European agent and his assistants ; the whole with its bright and picturesque surroundings representing a scene of prosperity as gratifying to the Government as it should be profitable to the merchants.

The gigantic cotton trees, which may be found along the river banks, make very conspicuous natural landmarks, as their upper foliage can be seen towering over all other vegetation for miles around. From a distance a particular town may be located by its cotton tree, although the town itself is not seen, as each cotton tree develops an individual character of its own ; so that, where it can be managed, a factory site is selected near one of these trees. I have said that these trees are gigantic, and at the lower part of the trunk they throw out huge buttresses which radiate from it, forming interstices quite capable of concealing many persons in an upright position. I was once visiting a factory where one of these trees was within the compound ; some of these interstices had been used for depositing oyster shells preparatory to their being burnt for making country lime. While conversing with the agent upon the verandah of the house, the head Kruman, for men from the Kru coast find employment in Sherbro also, came running up to the agent in a great state of alarm, and, almost breathless, gasped out, "Massa, Massa, de cotton tree deh walker!" That a cotton tree should have taken to perambulate the factory, after having been stationary for probably a century, was certainly a phenomenon not to be lightly regarded or carelessly dismissed ; but as I had previously noticed the oyster shells it perhaps was not unreasonable that I should have at once connected this pedestrian feat of the tree with the presence of a large snake, whose move-

ment beneath the shells caused a surface undulation. Upon our going down we found this to be the case, for after we had removed a quantity of the shells out wriggled a big snake, which was at once despatched in the presence of an agitated crowd. When it was dead one man immediately stepped forward, opened its mouth, and cut away the poison bags, to be retained by him as a fetish specific against something which I do not now remember.

The cotton tree had not shifted from its original position ; in fact, I may say that it appeared to be the most unmoved object present.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LOWER WATERWAYS

I HAVE already referred to the so-called Sherbro River as an arm of the sea set with many small islands, into which flow several rivers from the interior.

Opposite the south end of the Sherbro Island is a strip of land known as Turner's Peninsula, one side of which fronts the Atlantic and the other forms the left bank of a long and fine waterway, that, although fed by several rivers that run down from the watersheds of the mainland, has a course for about a hundred miles parallel with the sea. The strip of land varies in width from five miles at its broadest to less than half a mile. This narrowest part is at Koronko, about halfway along the peninsula, where the water is always quite fresh ; so that the fresh water and the salt sea are here only separated by half a mile.

This waterway is known by two names. It is called the Bum-Kittam up to its confluence with the Big Bum, which comes down from the interior and meets it. Beyond this point it is the Lower Kittam, because the Upper Kittam, which flows through the Krim country parallel with the Big Bum, meets it in the same way.



The Big Bum, this Upper Kittam and the Lower Kittam, that runs parallel with the sea, are the three principal trading waterways of the Sherbro. Along them three fourths of the produce are brought down.

Turner's Peninsula is really a long sand-bank covered with vegetation. On the bank facing the fine Kittam River are numerous native towns and a few factories.

For the first twenty miles the banks are lined with mangrove trees, but as soon as fresh water is reached these give place to a mixed description of dense, handsome tropical vegetation.

The appearance of this tree-fringed shore, as seen from the water, gives one the impression that it is so thickly wooded as to be almost impenetrable; but this is misleading, as upon landing and proceeding for less than fifty yards, it is seen that this tall vegetation is merely a border, and that beyond it there are great tracts of the long grass the natives use for thatching, extending for many miles, and a great many scattered towns and villages.

These grass lands are submerged every rainy season, when, instead of being available for walking, large boats can easily be sailed along them.

At the extreme end of the Kittam, about eighty miles from Bonthe, is the Kase lake; a fine open piece of water about seven miles long by five miles broad. The southern shore forms the beginning of Turner's Peninsula; while on the opposite shore, which is in the Protectorate, a good start may be made for any part of the Hinterland.

Two miles from Kase town is Lavana, also on the lake, and here the Peninsula is only one mile across to the North Atlantic. Lavana was a port of entry until about three



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FIG. 3.--MANGROVE TREES ON RIVER BANK, SHREBBO.



years ago when it ceased to be so. The shores of the lake are heavily timbered on all sides; the water of course is perfectly fresh and is used for drinking purposes by the people. The lake abounds with excellent fish, which frequently leap into one's boat as one sails along.

In the dry season the water falls so low that there is barely a channel for even boats to pass; but in the rains there is a rise of about twenty-five feet, when the water overflows the country all round and rushes down the river with great swiftness. Navigation then only takes half the time occupied in the dries; but although there is this advantage in the downward journey, the upward journey is proportionately lengthened. With all the rivers swollen by the rush of water from the great watersheds of the interior, all of these waterways are available for navigation and for the carrying on of trade for much greater distances than during the dries.

As well as these principal trading rivers, there are also the Bagru, Imperri, Small Bum, and Jong Rivers, all of which, coming down from different parts of the Sherbro Hinterland, contribute their share of native trade; although these rivers are not navigable so far inland as the others.

When getting a considerable distance up the Lower Kittam the width of the navigable waterway becomes sensibly diminished, owing to the accumulation of a dense morass upon both sides. This mass of water-bound reeds affords an excellent nesting ground for various descriptions of "water-ducks" and other kinds of wild-fowl, with which the river abounds. But it is chiefly as a fishing ground that this reedy growth is of utility to the natives, as the smaller fish collect underneath it. To

obtain these fish this sudd has to be cut away in blocks. Whole families may be seen in the water attacking the different detached patches of sudd in their endeavours to entrap the fish, by passing small nets under these little floating islands, which after being released drift about the river and are not altogether a source of unmixed pleasure to owners of craft travelling at night, until they strike against some other part of the bank and become attached once more.

Fishing forms one of the staple industries of this part of the river, as fish of several kinds are most plentiful. There are many species, including the tarpon and the manatee. At a town that I called at recently I found thousands of a small fish, up to about seven inches in length, called kaiyon, laid upon long raised wooden grids or "bettis," as they are locally called, in process of being smoke-dried from wood fires underneath. The trade in fish is principally carried on in the Krim country. They are packed into palm-leaf hampers and taken inland to be bartered for palm kernels or country cloths.

The rivers are infested with crocodiles; so much so that the natives will not attempt to bathe alone and always go out in parties. I have noticed that the crocodile always swims against the stream; and this is one way of distinguishing him, as, when in the water, only his head is seen, and that very indistinctly, and occasionally a portion of his serrated back. At certain seasons these creatures become very bold and voracious. I have seen them come on to the river bank within twenty-five feet of my house, and I have known one chase a woman and take a piece out of her thigh.

One day I was standing on the river bank watching a

couple of my lambs that had gone down to the water side, and while I was admiring their gambols, without the slightest warning, in less time than it takes to write it, a huge beast rushed out of the water, seized the lamb and was gone—I don't believe it took him three seconds.

At low water crocodiles can be found almost at any time of day basking in the sun with their jaws open, on the mangrove peat, or upon the dry sand-banks. If you shoot one the carcass is difficult to obtain—as when wounded they instantly spring into the water. Only recently I came upon a huge fellow asleep, with his head hanging over the bank. I shot him from the canoe I was in, at a distance of about a hundred yards. The shot was at once fatal. There was not a movement in his body, but we could see him very slowly slipping into the water by his own weight, and when we were within a few yards of the bank he sank and we lost him, to the great disappointment of my boys, who had been looking forward to a rare feast—for they consider crocodile a luxury. As they were done out of it, I informed the chief of the neighbouring town, and he promised to send some people to dive for it; so no doubt the town-folk got it after all and enjoyed every bit of it.

The largest crocodile I have seen landed measured sixteen feet; but I have noticed larger ones lying on the banks.

As to the climate along these lower rivers and the coast-line generally a great deal has been said.

Undoubtedly it is extremely unhealthy to Europeans—and I do not observe that any change for the better has taken place since my first connection with it thirty years ago. I happen to be one of the very few who have survived the

ravages of the climate, although I am persuaded that during that time I have had my share, and perhaps more than my share, of African fever in most of its varieties of form. I have no good word to speak of the climate upon the coast, and the death-rate amongst the Europeans during the past two years will corroborate this assertion. I believe the climate to be as bad to-day as it has ever been ; but I do say, and say it with much gratification, that the treatment of malarial diseases is very much better understood now by our medical officers than it was formerly. It is comforting to those who are within reach of medical assistance to know that if they are attacked by malarial disease all that modern science can do for them will be done.

It is gratifying also to notice how many among the wealthier natives go to the great expense of sending their sons to England to receive a thorough medical training.

Many of these sons are to-day duly qualified medical officers, holding high appointments in the Government service, and showing both zeal and ability in the performance of their professional duties. We must never lose sight of the fact that the ultimate development of Africa must be brought about by the employment of native talent. If colour prejudice exists in British West Africa, the sooner it is done away with the better. Where the people understand education, they manifest a very great desire for it. They are naturally ambitious, eager to improve their social position, and many of them are really gifted men and women. In my own district there is not an official who is not a coloured man. Their work is quite up to the average and gives me every satisfaction,

many of the seniors showing unusual intelligence in their own departments.

To return to malaria, the deadliest enemy of the European resident, my own belief is that malaria and mangroves go together. When you are out of the influence of the mangroves you are beyond the region of malaria.

Here I will ask you to look at Figure 2. This represents a little piece of swamp that may be perhaps a mile wide. The mangroves here are young, and the absence of the dense foliage, which, as shown in Figure 3, comes with the later growth, enables us to see the extraordinary arching and tangle of the roots. These interlacing roots quickly become impenetrable. The mangrove will only grow where the water is salt or brackish, and tidal. The two pictures show low tide. At high water these roots are submerged; when the tide recedes there is left over the mangrove area a boggy mass of decomposing vegetable matter. The burning tropical sun speedily draws out the poison; the wind carries it long distances inland, and produces a fine tract of malarious country.

The banks of all the rivers, as far as the water remains salt, are lined with tall old mangroves. Some of these mangrove banks extend for over thirty miles up the rivers. The ground of these swamps is really a black peat, and may be cut up into blocks for road making, but it will not burn.

The mangrove banks are natural oyster-beds. The spat settles on the mangroves and gets the benefit of the rise and fall of the tide. Good, though small, oysters are the result. So when we tell our friends that "oysters grow on trees" we are merely stating a fact. They must, however, be taken with caution, as sometimes they are



poisonous. For myself I only eat them cooked. In the season they are hawked about Bonthe. They are not dear; a whole dug-out canoe-load may be bought for a shilling. In the Great Scarcies river, to the north of Sierra Leone, some few patches of the mangrove banks have been cleared and turned to account for rice cultivation. No doubt when our excellent Sherbro rice is in greater demand for export, some one will be tempted to utilise the Sherbro mangrove swamps in the same manner, in which case the district will be both richer and healthier. The bark of the mangrove is used locally for dyeing purposes and in the process of tanning. The drooping vines are used for wattling the mud huts previous to daubing them.

My own experience has been that when I have got beyond the mangrove influence—say about fifty miles inland—I have rarely suffered from fever, even when my daily domestic arrangements were of the roughest, and I was frequently reduced to famine rations.

The inland climate strikes me as altogether different from that near the coast, and I think it must really be so, for the seasons do not appear to be the same. There is a fixed wet and dry season on the coast; but it seemed to me that in the highlands amongst the hills and mountains one was liable to get rain at any time. The air is most fresh and invigorating, and as one gets further away from the coast influences a delightful feeling of buoyancy is experienced, and fills one with renewed energy.

There is one subject on which every European on the coast is agreed, that is, in an intense hatred and loathing of the mangrove. Its deadly monotony—mile after mile eternally the same, its fetid exhalations, its malarious

swamps, and the dose of fever ever lurking in each of its myriad roots, are indeed a combination the very stoutest heart cannot always defy. The only living creatures that enjoy the mangroves are the common mangrove monkeys, and they flourish exceedingly.

The moral is : Open up the comparatively healthy Hinterland. Penetrate beyond the fatal area of the mangrove.

This is easy enough to put on paper ; but there are difficulties, some of which we will consider in our next chapter.

But, first, a word on the seasons.

#### THE SEASONS.

The rains as gentle showers in a desultory way first make their appearance in places near the coast at the beginning of May. Towards the end of that month, although still irregular, they increase materially in volume and intensity, but confine themselves chiefly to the night time. For the first two weeks or so in June they are intermittent during both day and night ; but after that time the wet season has fully set in, the downpour being incessant, of that continuous and heavy kind peculiar to the tropics. "Deluge" would then be the term that would most properly describe them ; for it is no uncommon occurrence for one of these torrential outbursts to last for three or four days and nights without intermission. It is generally admitted that the beginning and ending of the wet season is the most unhealthy to Europeans. To those who have long resided in the tropics the rains are cool and bearable, although I must admit that even to them after a while they become

wearisome, and are very apt to cause something more than a mere drooping of spirits. This is especially the case when, as often happens, a long uninterrupted down-pour has raised a misty veil over the river and the surrounding vegetation, restricting the view, and casting a gloomy chilliness over everything. Even those accustomed to the climate feel its effects at such a time, but to the new-comers or inexperienced persons it is most depressing, and they deserve to have the sympathy of the older ones extended towards them. In October the rains begin to break and dwindle away until they appear only at night, and then cease altogether about the end of November or beginning of December.

But notwithstanding that the wet season may generally be taken as from June to November, there are sometimes very pleasant intervals of quite dry and indeed burning weather, lasting a few days. They are however spasmodic, but are most welcome.

The approaching changes in the seasons are very distinctly indicated by those terrific bursts of wind and rain so familiar to all acquainted with the tropics—tornados. The forked lightning and the thunder that herald the coming tempest are at times both sublime and awful. The blinding vividness of the lightning, the fantastic devices of the electric fluid, now descending as a long serrated band of fire, then darting in mystical zigzags not only about the heavens but all around one's self; the thunder-claps exploding with a sharp, cracking sound, very different from the rumble we generally know in England; the infuriated rushing and screaming of the wind as it carries all before it, uprooting massive trees, tearing away sheets of corrugated roofing and whirling

them in the air like so much paper, the whole accompanied by such a deluge as for the time being to flood the place and cause a general havoc ; all this is calculated to make a thinking man feel how small he is in the presence of these elemental forces. A tornado in the day-time coming over the river produces, perhaps, one of the most magnificent effects that can be imagined. The wind and rain from the mass of dense black clouds above sweep along and churn up the surface of the water as they go until it becomes changed into a small broken sea. There is a strange gentleness in the soft breeze that precedes this rapidly moving mass of darkness, with its peculiar lower fringe of opaque light, that forms a singular contrast with the wild hurricane which is hurrying on so soon to overwhelm the place. All this is very fine, as I say, when one can watch it and know what is going on, but when it happens in the dead of night and rouses one suddenly from sleep, the effect of the lightning and thunder, of the wind and rain, beating on the metal roofing, is simply bewildering and dangerous too. I was once staying in a house at Sulima where my bedroom led off from the corner of the veranda to which was affixed a tall and perfectly sound wooden flag-staff. During the night a tornado came on, and upon getting up after some frightful lightning and cannon-like reports of thunder, the flag-staff had gone, and as daylight came on I saw the ground was covered with minute splinters, that were all that remained of the staff. What course the fluid took I could not see, but probably it went into a tank of water immediately under the flag-staff. The next evening upon observing the watchman looking steadily at the place where the flag-staff had been, I asked him what he was

gazing at so intently. He replied: "Massa, nar dem fire what I been see last night, it make me fear for true. I no like em at all, Massa." He was no doubt thankful to be well out of it, and as a matter of fact I rather rejoiced that things had been no worse.

The Harmattan winds, which are locally called the "Smokes," may be looked for during December, and may continue for a couple of months or so; they are dry and withering winds, blowing in the early morning and continuing at times up till eleven or twelve in the day.

When strong, they are cold, and as they are usually blowing when one rises in the morning, the effect is perhaps more noticeable, and unless precautions are taken, in the way of putting on extra clothing, a chill may occur, to be followed by a dose of ague and fever. When the wind has ceased for the day, the heat is very great and a change of attire to something lighter becomes necessary. To those who can stand the coldness of the water, at such times the morning tub is especially delightful, but if one does not look kindly upon it, it should be taken tepid not cold, if at all.

During the Harmattans, book-covers, and such-like things assume a concave form, but uncurl after they have ceased. I have said that these winds are called the "Smokes," and very properly, because they sometimes cause heavy mists, and naturally at such times it is difficult for craft to make their landmarks. The following incident will show how very dense these "Smokes" are. About four years ago a Susu canoe left Sierra Leone harbour with twenty-two people in it, on their return journey to a village on the opposite shore. They got down to the Cape light-house, five miles away, and when

crossing, the "Smokes" became so thick that, although quite near, they entirely lost all sight of land. As the mist did not rise, in a short time they decided to drop their anchor; but upon attempting to do so, they found it could not reach the bottom. Night was coming on and they were drifting aimlessly about, in what direction they knew not. They had scarcely anything in the canoe in the way of food or water, as they had only left their village in the morning with some little produce to sell at Freetown, and were then returning. They ought to have been home by evening. They drifted about all night seeing nothing, and in the morning, although the weather was then clear, no land was in sight. They continued to drift for five days; at the end of that time one of the men died from exhaustion. Shortly after they heard in the far distance a low, rumbling sound. As it continued, they considered it to be the surf breaking somewhere and made for the sound. On the second day after, they came in sight of the coast, and were carried through an opening in the coast-line, which happened to be the dangerous sea-bar, between the Turner Peninsula and Sherbro Island. Not being Sherbro people they had no idea where they had got to, until they reached a little fakai on the island, when they heard that they were in Sherbro, and they were told that they would have to go to Bonthe to report themselves to me. They came round and related the circumstances to me, which I received with much scepticism, as they were unable to produce their clearance from the Custom House at Freetown, for the place they were originally going to. They said they had lost it with other things. As I could not conceive that their tale was true, I provided them at once with food and

gave them shelter while I communicated with Freetown to know if they had cleared at the Customs. In a few days I was officially informed that they had done so, and they were accordingly allowed to leave and given a fresh clearance. I mention this incident to show the effect of the Harmattans upon the atmosphere, and how very treacherous they may prove to boatmen using no compass.

There is, I think, an advantage in having only two seasons—inasmuch as one knows pretty well what to expect and when to expect it, and one makes preparations accordingly; while in England, for instance, the series of four seasons may, I am informed, occasionally be experienced during a single day even in the summer.







*Use face page 35*

**Fig. 4.—NATIVES CARRYING DOWN PRODUCE FROM THE HUNTERLAND OF SHERRRO, IN PALM LEAF HAMPERS.**

## CHAPTER IV

### TRANSPORT AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

I HAVE already alluded to the first great difficulty of transport—the blocking of the upper waterways.

Although the country is well watered with rivers, some, like the Sulima (or Moia), running completely through it and even for several days' journey beyond, yet so packed are they with boulders that they are useless even for the smallest canoes.

The question then arises, how is produce to be brought down to the navigable heads of the waterways? This at present can only be done by means of native carriers; and when you consider that it takes thirty men to carry down a ton of palm kernels in the primitive manner depicted in Figure 4, it will readily be seen how impossible it is to deal with any large quantities from far off places. The result of this difficulty is that the greater portion of Hinterland is altogether unworked.

Imports cannot penetrate; native produce cannot reach the coast; and consequently the revenue of the Colony from Customs duties does not increase.

The opening up of trade into the remoter parts of Sherbro is therefore of paramount importance; not only

to the natives but to the Colonial Government. If the natural productiveness of the country is to be turned to profitable account proper facilities for transport must be provided.

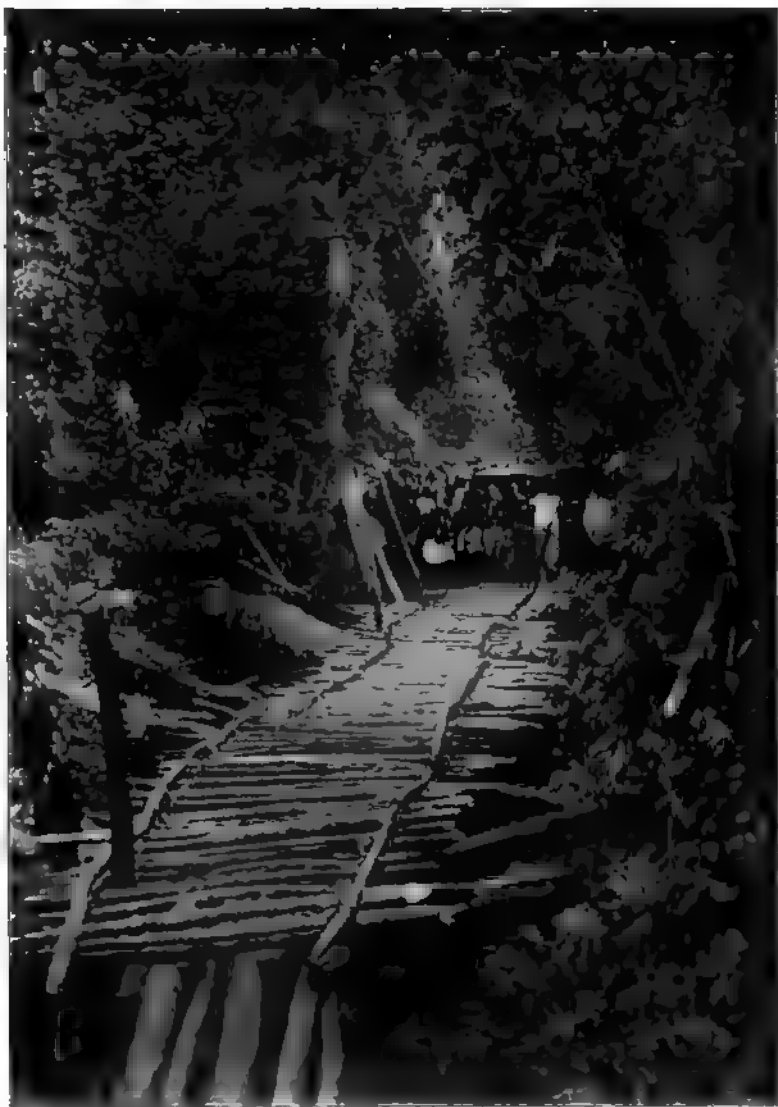
To the natives this is a question of the first importance. It must be borne in mind that prior to Governmental intervention incessant tribal wars provided employment for the people, furnishing as well a very considerable source of revenue for the chiefs, derivable principally from the sale of the war prisoners. Of course too the surplus population was effectually dealt with by being killed off. This state of things is now happily at an end, but other difficulties have taken its place ; and it has become absolutely necessary that some kind of remunerative employment should be found for the people and a certain income for the chiefs.

Everything that fosters a profitable native industry promotes peace. I lay great stress on the necessity of native industries being made profitable to the workers themselves ; and I am glad to say that the Colonial Government insists most stringently that its officers should pay properly for all native assistance and for what they purchase in the way of food.

By this great example the chiefs are being taught their duty to their own people, who are not slow to observe the pecuniary benefits accruing to the meanest servant employed by the Government.

Long as distances into the remote interior are naturally, they are increased materially by the incessant windings of the native paths. All over the country is a network of extremely narrow tracks, which branch off from the main roads. These roads themselves require widening, straight-





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Fig. 5. NATIVE STICK BRIDGE.  
Weak and insecure.

ening and maintaining ; that, at any rate, would be some help.

Again, strong and durable bridges are needed in a country so intersected with streams of all sorts and sizes, many of which may be stepped over in the dry season, but are unfordable during the rains, and require long raised trestle bridges, for the erection of which the country provides an abundance of excellent timber.

There is certainly much room for improvement in the roughly constructed native bridges. Some of these, although they appear sound, are absolutely rotten, as I have more than once found to my cost. On one occasion I and my carriers with their loads had safely passed over a high trestle bridge across a deep ravine. That bridge looked all right, but on returning a few minutes later accompanied only by my orderly, as we reached the centre the whole concern doubled up like a house of cards, and down we both went to the bottom. Fortunately no bones were broken, and the bed of the stream was dry ; but it was some time before we could be extricated from the mass of debris that fell with us.

During the rains it sometimes happens that people fall through these rotten structures, and are drowned in the water beneath.

The log bridges, which are merely the trunks of oil palms raised upon supports, are often of great length. They are sometimes so rotten that they will not bear the slightest weight, though seemingly quite good. The log bridge is generally found over swamps and quagmires.

Recently it took me eighteen minutes to cross one, which must have been a good mile long, and in no place was it wider than the trunks of two oil palms, that is under two

feet in width. The log bridge (Figure 7) was over muddy slush, running through swampy vegetation. I could not reach the bottom of this morass with a five-foot pole; so that any one falling into it would have had a very bad time. Those who have had to travel in a hammock over a short piece of water where there has been no bridge of any sort, will know what the sensation is when the hammock is abruptly dropped with him into the water, by the slipping of the two front men, who may have trodden upon a sunken log. This has occasionally happened to me, and I may say that the feeling of the sudden contact with the very cold water entirely knocks the breath out of one, and it is some seconds before it can be regained. I have a very vivid recollection of the last time that this happened to me, and can only say that it did not impress me as being a pleasure to be cultivated or often repeated.



*[To face page 38.]*

**Fig. 6.—A HIGH TRESTLE BRIDGE OVER DEEP RUNNING STREAM,  
SHERRRO DISTRICT.**





## CHAPTER V

### BONTHE

MOST of us retain something of our first vivid impression of a country that, to us, is entirely fresh. Unfortunately, that freshness fades all too soon, and, especially in a region where the mangrove abounds, gives place to a sense of monotony, only to be dispelled by a constant study of one's surroundings.

I never put my own first impressions of the West Coast upon paper, and now they have been crossed and recrossed by the experiences of many years ; but I have fortunately just come upon a few lines written by an English lady when, to her, all was still in its first freshness. It is not a bad thing to arrive in the Sherbro after dark, because then the whole scene bursts upon you suddenly in the morning.

I will not mention the exact spot from which the view described in the following lines may be seen. It is typical of that part of the Sherbro River from which the Atlantic is visible :—“ At half-past five next morning I went out on to the verandah, and there stood speechless for a while, taking in the utter loveliness of the scene before me. This is what I saw : A broad river, far off in the distance the sea,

its breakers sparkling like silver. Near at hand, the path by which I arrived last night, that I now saw to be bordered on each side by a hedge of heliotrope covered with masses of blossom, over which countless humming birds, more brilliant than jewels, were hovering, their tiny bodies quivering and sparkling in the sun as they sucked the honey through their long, curved beaks.

“A bread-nut tree with broad shining leaves all but touched me, and palms were everywhere. Everywhere too were the busy little palm-birds, gorgeous in black and yellow velvet, that were stripping the green off the great palm leaves, twitter, twitter, t'wittering incessantly.

“A solitary cocoa-nut tree watched over a cemented duck-pond in one corner of the enclosed space in front of the house; in another, a group of glossy black-skinned girls, with gleaming white teeth, were drawing water at a thatched-roofed well, laughing and talking as if life were the finest joke in the world to them.

“Presently a boy, attired in a red cotton handkerchief, came up the path, carrying a bunch of brilliant fish just caught, and threaded on a piece of grass. A minute later the native cook came in. ‘Pickin done bring fish, Mar : say eight copper, Mar.’ I gave him fourpence, and then the fruiterer appeared. The fruiterer was a little dot of a girl, in a loose blue and white muslin garment, with coral earrings in her baby ears, the prettiest little black creature imaginable, poising a great water-melon on her woolly head. I could not resist calling her up.

“‘Good morning, Mar ! Me mammy say six copper, Mar,’ she piped in the most musical voice in the world, as I secured her melon for threepence, a copper being a half-penny.





Fig. 7.—A GOOD LOG BRIDGE OVER A QUAGMIRE, THROUGH VERY BEAUTIFUL FERNS AND PALMS. BENDU, SHERBRO. (Page 38.)



Fig. 8.—GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BONTIE,  
The Residence of the District Commissioner. *[To face page 41]*

“ This is what the West Coast looks like to most Europeans before their first dose of fever. It is then all too lovely to be unhealthy ; too lovely to be even real.”

I will now attempt to describe Bonthe and its people. Bonthe, on Sherbro Island, is the seat of Government for the Sherbro district. All the Government buildings are on the river bank, as are also the large trading factories. Bonthe is essentially a trading place. Everybody who is not a Government official or a minister of religion is engaged in trade of some kind. Behind the line of great factories on the bank are the native retail stores. As everybody trades, if they cannot afford a store they get a “ pitch ” by the roadside, on which they set out their goods. The women hawk things about the streets, carrying their stock in a calabash on their heads. If they have more than they can manage themselves, they are attended by children with other calabashes.

These women do a great trade in prints and real Madras handkerchiefs. Many of them are very sharp and smart indeed. They all belong to the Coast, and not to the interior, and are more or less Europeanised. They generally appear in a starched print gown, that follows the London fashions at a respectful distance. The “ Princess Robe ” is very popular, and so are balloon sleeves. As they carry everything on the head their gait is splendid, until they attain that object of their ambition, a pair of patent leather boots, when it is spoiled. A bright Madras handkerchief for the head is indispensable ; it is tied with great art, with its two ends standing up stiffly in front.

They are very keen traders, and as smart in business as

in dress, and they know the difference between what their own folks will pay and "de white man's price."

The pickins begin to trade almost as soon as they can toddle, and are sent out to hawk small things ; fruit, fish, pancakes, etc. Pancakes by the way are a favourite delicacy. There is a village where they are made called "Pancake fakai." The pickins never spill anything they carry on their heads. A little creature of eight will carry a quart bottle of kerosene without a stopper and never spill a drop. Some of the little girls are very pretty, with bright eyes and gleaming white teeth, which they manage to keep. Native women can always afford to laugh, which reminds me of a group of laughing, chattering women standing outside the office of a European merchant to whom I was talking.

"Mammy make you no laugh so much," the merchant said to the noisiest of the group. "I no able for hear myself speak."

Always quick at repartee, she replied : "What dat you say, Sar ? Make I no dey laugh ? Which way you say I must no laugh ? Dat time I go die I sabby I no able for laugh again ; so I must laugh now !"

With which she burst into uproarious peals, showing her magnificent teeth to their best advantage. It did one good to hear such a genuine, healthy laugh.

The children's clothes too, when they wear any, are always beautifully clean. As I have said above, the gait of the women and children is perfect until they take to shoes. I have seen a tall and well dressed woman walking along the road with a kerchief across her woolly head, an umbrella pointing fore and aft, and a tiny pot of pomatum beside it, all perfectly poised. The women and

children generally display plenty of fine silver bangles. All the Coast people speak broken English, some of it being so completely pulverised that the new-comer cannot understand it. We sometimes get it a good deal broken in the police court. Here, for instance, is what a witness answered in an assault case when asked if he had seen plaintiff and defendant fighting :—

“ Make I say if I been see dem two fight, Sar? If dem all two stomachs been dere one place, Sar? No, Sar; I no been see dat.” A witness after repeating himself a great deal, at last said something that caused the police clerk to ask :—

“ Did he tell you dat, in this man e eye?”

“ No, Sar, he no been told me dat in e eye,” was the answer, that meant, in the presence of accused

The Coast people are, however, very civil; indeed, throughout the country, from the highest to the lowest, greetings are never forgotten. If you pass a native woman's store you say, “ Well, Mammy, how you do? you well?” “ Thank God for to-day, Sar,” is the response. They are kindly people in their way. They take a peculiar interest in one's far off home and those it contains. My greeting on my return from England is generally :—

“ Massa, you done come. I did glad for see you for true. How you been lef missis, Sar? And your famble? Dey all well? What ting you bring me?” And all this is quite ceremonious and not at all familiar.

As for schools, education is not compulsory. The aborigines, or original country people, sometimes object to their children getting book learning, and have said to me :—

“ When they sabby book too much they can lef their



daddy and their mammy ; they no go look em again. They get big eye." On the other hand many chiefs have told me that they would welcome schools in their towns, the general feeling being that the children should be brought up to a certain amount of book knowledge. In Freetown itself there is a technical school, and although it has only existed a short time it is already showing its value, especially in building. The pupils are beginning to understand the importance of straight lines ; also how to blend imported colours ; but no school of this kind has as yet penetrated into the Sherbro. Education of any kind does not go far inland, as prior to 1896 the interior was practically untouched by European influence.

Cricket, as will be seen in Figure 10, has "caught on." I saw the game being played on the main road in Bonthe, about five o'clock one afternoon, and the team kindly stood in position long enough for me to photograph them.

As I am anxious to devote as much space as possible to the comparatively unknown Hinterland, I will leave the Coast after I have spun one or two yarns ; for without a yarn, I am told, no book on West Africa can be considered complete. I must state, however, that all my yarns are true, and are only introduced here to give some idea of the common talk of the community.

The following letter may give an idea of the fluency with which the somewhat educated Coast native can express himself. The writer was a policeman, temporarily in charge of a small out-station.

" SIR—I have the honour to sumitt before your Worship the dangerous of certain incident at this Station. By



Fig. 9.—PETTY TRADING—ROADSIDE PITCHES, BONTHE, SHERBRO (Page 42.)



*[To face page 41.]*

Fig 10.—A GAME OF CRICKET UPON THE HIGH ROAD UNDER MANGO TREES.  
BONTHE, SHERRBO.



information that one Gbanna alias James have in his possession 2 Large Serpent, namely, the Boa Constrictor, 20 feet in Length, the orther amphis boa na 18 feet in Length, this Serpent was kept in his premises for the purpose of raise enthusiastic fears in the house provided for Police Constable in this said dwelling house it always give light and crow ; when asking the natives they then pointed the said man that he is the man that keep the Serpent in his premises to terrify any constable who residing in the said house to let them suffer under severe illness.

“ II. I am about to point out certain point, and to explain to you the nature and the description of Serpent kept in houses by some of this natives ; as there Domestic Worshipers there deformity venomous there present malignity But our prejudice as taught us to beware of serpent—has from the beginning been the enemy of man, But some of the natives as the man dose to carry out several mischief and to destroy mens life as hitherto to continued terrify and annoy notwithstanding all the arts has been practised to destroy them.

“ 3. Formidable in itself it deters the invaders from the pursuits and from its figure capable of finding Shelters from Whence she came. Dissappers moment as it discover, But to those who would venture to try the re-encounter those who generally drive Lion tiger wolf Leopard But Serpent to which my letters treats in particular there power frequently punish to where there master direct them.

“ 4. For this cause your Worship I call upon your serious attention on the Subject. If your Worship could sent out warrant to serve on this man and let him appear before

you in Court and present before him threats that will tend to imprison him So much will be the better for the life of Constable might rest secure and his fellow kindreds—the former police who have residing here will inform you better of the man, as for my part I earnestly desire that Legal proceeding will be institute against the man for keeping Serpent in his house to carry all mischief, therefore I am waiting to hear your favourable reply.”

On one occasion a chief who was visiting the Lower Sherbro was dining with me in the evening. He had come down accompanied by about forty of his wives. At the same time a Scotchman was present with his very pretty young wife, whom he had recently married. During dinner I said to this chief, who was able to speak broken English, “My friend, why you no lef all them plenty wife, and get one white wife?” He replied, “I able for do em, in fact I done order to England for two or three, but they no been come yet.”

The Scotchman then chimed in :—

“Look me own wife ; you no like em ?”

The chief in the most solemn manner looked up at the lady, who was sitting opposite to him, and said :—

“Yes, the woman fine—I like em bad—suppose you go gree” (agree). “I go give you five hundred ton banga” (palm kernels worth £5,000), “and I go take em with me one time in me boat.”

As this was said in a most serious way, I quite believed that he was in earnest ; so it was time for the Scotchman to laugh off the joke, which he did by saying :—

“Ah, well, I no tire of my wife just now, but that time I am I go let you know.”

The somewhat crestfallen chief thereupon said no more, and the matter dropped ; but upon his leaving a case of champagne was put into his boat for him, as this was a chief who drank nothing but what he was pleased to term "*sampain*."

I am not aware that the indent for the European wives was ever carried out.

On another occasion when a native merchant, a very wealthy man, was dining with me there was a dish of olives on the table. I drew his attention to them, and asked him if he knew what they were. He said :—

"No, I no been sab 'em. They can taste sweet?" I said: "Well, they are not particularly sweet, but we white men—we like 'em bad, and that time we able for get 'em we sabby which way for eat em." "Make I go try em?" And with that he took one, put it to his mouth, and bit a piece out of it. He quickly withdrew it, made a great grimace, and in other ways signified his dislike to it. As soon as he had recovered from the shock he found words to say :—

"This thing I no dey like em ; he no fit me eye at all, but all how I go take this piece home to me wife."

With that he popped the remainder of it into his pocket. But I am inclined to think that olives would not figure on his daily menu.

While travelling in my boat, after a long pull of some hours, the boatmen began to flag a little, although the endurance of practised boatmen is remarkable. The stroke-man, wishing to urge the men on, called out to them :—

"Pull, Bo, pull, pull, do, I beg you:" and adding by way of encouragement, I presume, "Suppose you die I go bury you."

One evening my boy came to me with his face beaming to inform me that one of the banana plants in my compound "dun get pickin, Sar," meaning that it had just come into flower preparatory to bearing fruit.

When hearing a case of robbery alleged against a native, for having stolen a calabash of articles from the head of a little girl, who had been sent to hawk them about the town of Bonthe by her mother, while the mother was giving her evidence in court she said that she had sent the child out, and that in about two hours "I see my little girl come back to me with cry" (crying), "and she say, 'Dis man take all de market, and put his head nar bush.'" This meant that he had stolen the calabash of things and had run away with them into the bush.

Some years ago, when there was an eclipse of the sun, in the morning about eleven o'clock I was standing with a friend outside the house looking at it, and I sent my old black butler to bring a large basin with some water, in order that the eclipse might be reflected in it. The old man looked on in surprise, then suddenly disappeared and returned with an empty wine bottle, and carefully proceeded to turn the contents of the basin into it. Upon my asking him the reason of this he said, "I want for keep de 'clipse good fashion, that make I put em in de bottle." He was allowed to carry the bottle and contents away, but how long he kept the eclipse local history does not state.

The Sierra Leonians are not behind the rest of the world in asking for a present at Christmas and on other occasions, but their phraseology is not quite the same as with us in England. The native who speaks broken English would say: "Massa, what ting you go give me for my Christmas?" That of course is sufficiently explicit, but



Fig. 11.—A SIDE STREET SCENE AT BONTHE, SHERBRO.  
In the little shed to the right is a fruit stall.



Fig. 12.—SMALL SWAMP AT LOW WATER. BONTHE, SHERBRO.  
*[To face page 48.]*





on special occasions the request is not so comprehensible. For instance, in 1887, during the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee, which happened to come at the same time as the Centenary commemoration of the Colony of Sierra Leone, a local character at Freetown approached me with :—

“ Massa, what you go give me for my Jubilee? ”

And upon finding that I was not disposed to take his hint, he continued :—

“ What! you no give me nutting for my Jubilee! Well, no matter, you go give me some ting for my Centenary.”

I am afraid he was again unsuccessful; but he seemed soothed when I told him to come round to me upon his next Centenary, for he moved on apparently quite satisfied with that indefinite postponement.

Different people in different countries have special characteristics in their ways of dealing, and are more or less celebrated for their elastic prices when trying to dispose of any article they may offer for sale, but I think that some of our Sherbro hawkers are not far behind the sharpest of them. There is a very expressive term in Sherbro, “sweet mouth,” which means talking a customer into buying what he does not want, but what the seller is anxious to get rid of.

“Sweet mouth” is, when necessary, combined with an astounding reduction of the original price, when the downward scale is performed with such lightning rapidity that it is scarcely safe to make any sort of offer at all, which no doubt gave rise to the old local saying: “It costs a shilling to open one's mouth, but two shillings to shut it.”

A native collector of natural history specimens, which for choice he would obligingly offer to the European public at the highest prices obtainable, once came to me with a fine Mandingo snake, which he displayed to the best advantage. This kind of reptile, with drawn fangs, is a handsome and amusing creature, and I have frequently played ball with one when coiled up. As I already had several other sorts, I was willing to add this one if I could obtain it at a reasonable price.

“Massa, look, I dun bring you one fine snake,” my worthy friend began.

“Well, what do you want for it?”

“Massa, you go pay me one pound ten for em.”

“Nonsense! If you can take three shillings I don't mind buying it.”

“No, Massa, I no able for take dat, but s'pose you go put udder sixpence dare I go 'gree.”

And the snake became mine for three and six.

There are, however, some highly educated natives, especially in the medical and legal professions, and in connection with the various Missions.

The Coast people are all professing Christians, and take a very great interest in their different Churches or Missions.

There are in Bonthe and its neighbourhood, Church of England, Wesleyan, Roman Catholic and the Mendi Mission of the American United Brethren. All are well attended, and generously supported by the people themselves.

Personally, few things connected with the Coast have ever given me greater pleasure than the enthusiasm with

which the people worked to build their new church of St. Matthew. Its erection occupied four years, and the £5,000 it cost was practically raised by the Sherbro people themselves. I believe this to be the finest native effort ever made on the West Coast of Africa, and must have been the result of a vast amount of self-denial, that was all the more remarkable as many of these people had lost a great deal by the rising two years before.

On 10th October, 1900, the Bishop of Sierra Leone, Dr. Taylor-Smith, consecrated the new edifice, which is a fine stone building just like a modern English church. It was opened free of debt. Three stained-glass memorial windows had been sent out from England, one was in memory of those who had been killed in the rising ; the second in memory of the late pastor, who had conceived the idea of building the church, but who had been taken to his rest before the project could be completed ; and the third, which I had myself the honour, in conjunction with the pastor's wife, of unveiling, in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of her late Majesty Queen Victoria. I shall always remember that it was on our beloved Queen's last birthday that this privilege fell to my lot. The church can seat about 500 persons.

This church is worked under "the Native Pastorate" system. The present pastor, the Rev. Canon M. Wilson, M.A., has unbounded influence over his people. Indeed, when one considers what he has stirred them up, by his own devotion, to accomplish, the whole undertaking, to those who know all the circumstances, appears not only most extraordinary but most hopeful.

People who can carry through such a work are surely

capable of taking other great steps in advance. There is plenty of enthusiasm and kindly feeling among them, and what they have done is an object-lesson to the entire native community. It is the result, however, of a century of devoted Mission work ; for to the Missions alone is it due that the children have been gathered into schools and churches, and have learned the lessons that have borne this good fruit.





Fig. 13. OVERLAND TRAVELLING BY CANOPIED HAMMOCK, CARRIED BY FOUR BEARERS, SIERRERO DISTRICT



Fig. 14. OVERLAND TRAVELLING BY SMALL HAMMOCK CARRIED BY TWO BEARERS, SIERRERO HINTERLAND.

*Go face page 53.*

## CHAPTER VI

### OVERLAND TRAVELLING

I WILL now devote some time to the consideration of Overland Travelling, of which I have had a very large experience.

The only means of getting through the country is by hammock, as unfortunately horses will not live within the Sherbro.

When you are about to start on a long journey it is advisable to provide yourself with two sorts of hammocks ; one with a canopy, to be carried by four men, for the broader roads, the other, merely a country cloth tied at both ends to a pole. This last is for use along the narrow tracks, and is carried by two men only.

Figure 13 shows the large hammock with canopy. I was proceeding along the road here seen, which is a good specimen of an open highway, when, soon after passing a small town, I noticed that I was followed by a number of people, some of whom had never before seen a white man. The surroundings were so favourable that I stopped the hammock and took the view.

The advantages of this hammock are, that it is a protection from the sun and allows one to jot



down topographical observations and to take compass bearings.

The little hammock (Figure 14) has also its advantages : you can see from it the tops of trees, orchids, birds, and so on ; still it is extremely uncomfortable, as it fits you like a shroud. But in going under the sun, or in a very narrow path through dense and spinous vegetation, a loose country cloth is thrown across the pole and falls over your head, blocking out all view.

You, however, make up time ; your two bearers are always on the trot, and even when changing, practised hands will not stop, but will somehow heave the pole on to the shoulders of the fresh men who are running beside them.

Many of the tracks are so very narrow that even this small hammock cannot be got along them, and there is nothing for it but to get out and cut one's way through the impeding vegetation.

The broad roads are of comparatively late date. In earlier days the tracks were purposely kept narrow, so that they could be easily blocked during the frequent tribal wars. The natives still always walk in single file.

You may meet a chief coming along with a large following. He leads the column, and his people one after another walk behind him. Perhaps half a dozen of his wives walk immediately behind him, each carrying some article of his. Some time ago, when a great many chiefs were travelling down with me from the interior, the great fetish of one of them, carried by his head wife, was a pair of country made iron tongs something like snuffers, about three feet in length. These tongs had been previously charmed by the Mori, or Mohammedan magician ; and the chief, although an

unusually intelligent man, believed that his life depended upon these tongs, that in fact his life was somehow bound up in them.

When travelling in the little hammock the occupant must be carefully on the look-out if he would avoid the thorny vines which hang down from the high trees. I still remember one of these vines catching me in the left nostril, slitting it up and partially lifting me out of the hammock, and had my boys not instantly stopped, I might have been very seriously damaged. One cannot be too cautious when travelling through dense vegetation, for most of it seems to be of this spinous description ; the dried, fleshy base of the leaves of bamboo palms in particular resemble the teeth of a cross-cut saw more than anything else.

Pine-apple leaves, too, have such serrated edges as to be a source of danger to the bare legs of the carriers. Travelling through the country is more frequently than not very disappointing, as of course in these narrow defiles the density of the vegetation prevents anything whatever from being seen beyond the short distance immediately ahead, frequently only a few yards.

There is a complete network of these narrow paths throughout the country ; at the same time the wider paths forming the principal roads are through forests of tall and massive trees, the straggling buttresses of which stand out high upon the pathway, as it were in great contortions, and extend for many yards around, gradually diminishing until entirely lost. There are also many very beautiful glades over which the branches interlace and make travelling for the time being cool and refreshing. These glades are usually fringed with pine-apple plants, that form a dado to the tall, heavily wooded forest, continuing for many miles. The

length of the pine-apple leaf frequently extends to eight feet. The inside fibre is twisted by the natives, by rolling on the knee, into a fine thread used for the more delicate kinds of netting. The pine-apple seems a very hardy plant ; and I have noticed, in going over rocky ground, that this plant was the only one to be found thriving. It sometimes happens that in going through these glades one comes to a narrow opening, when a glimpse of the surrounding country is obtainable, disclosing thickly wooded hills and mountains all around.

The first intimation of the near approach to a town is the sight of clusters of banana plants, or of kola trees, which are generally covered by a mass of leafy bundles and stones hanging to the lower branches, all fetish emblems.

Formerly every town was encircled by from two to four war fences, which were rough stockades. These war fences were formed of live trees, the lower part being kept free from foliage, while the top was allowed to sprout. The stakes were thickly interlaced with a rude lattice of long, live canes that also sprouted, so that there was soon a dense mass of vegetation at the top of the fence, which as a rule was about fifteen to twenty feet high. The gate of the war fence was without exception a solid slab of hard wood, cut from the buttress of a large tree, and so strong that it could never be broken in native warfare. These fences are not allowed now by the Government. As a matter of fact in native warfare they never attempt to force a gate—it is always a stockade that is attacked. If the head war people or Krubars, who are all fetish men, could succeed in surmounting the outer war fence, they could then remove the heavy posts which secured the gate at the

back, and open it to their followers—if they were not killed before they could do so ; for it was by no means certain that if they got over one war fence they would be able to get over another. The vegetation at the approach to some of the big war towns was so dense, thick and thorny as to be absolutely impenetrable.

In many cases there was a short, straight roadway opposite the principal entrance, the sides of which, being of this dense bush, afforded no cover to the enemy, thus enabling the defenders of the town to use their guns through the loopholes in the outer stockade with good effect, and with little danger to themselves.

It appears to me that the greatest difficulty that has to be contended with on the West Coast is the isolation that most Europeans have to endure. Of course it is much worse when travelling in the bush, where all conversation with the chiefs and people has to be carried on through an interpreter. The days close early ; when the sun has set there is no long twilight ; darkness comes at once ; and as it is impossible to carry enough oil to burn a sufficiently bright light to read or work by, a long and dreary night is before one. This, coupled with the discomfort of the hut, the outside noise of the town, and the beating of tom-toms is not at all conducive to a restful night.

It sometimes happens that one has to remain for many days together at a town where large political meetings are to be convened. Upon one occasion, when a very important meeting had to be held, it was suggested to me that as the chief had a village about eight miles off, it would be more convenient if I were to remain there with my people while the chiefs and their followers were coming in from the surrounding districts. I did so, and stayed

there two weeks. It was a small, miserable village, absolutely devoid of interest, and provisions for myself were scarce and difficult to obtain.

On the tenth day I found that I was suffering from dysentery, and, that being my first attack, I was practically ignorant of the treatment. I, however, lived upon rice, but rapidly got weak and very depressed. As I felt that I could do nothing for myself I determined upon a change, and early the next morning we packed up and started away for the big town. I had not been gone half an hour before I felt the depression lifted ; and at the end of three hours, when we reached the town, my spirits had revived ; and in two or three days, when the sickness had passed away, I regained my usual health and had a very successful meeting. So I advise all travellers, when they get down in this way, to shift their quarters as soon as possible and get a complete change of scene and surroundings which will bring with it a change of water, as it is not improbable that what I suffered from was brought about by the impurities in the water I drank.

I have found drugs in tabloid form very useful, as in this form one can carry a good variety of medicine in a very small compass. It has been so thoroughly shown by the medical faculty that quinine is the foundation for the treatment of African fevers that I need say nothing on the subject beyond stating that I thoroughly endorse that theory. Quinine is undoubtedly of the greatest use as a prophylactic when taken in time. Any one upon rising in the morning and feeling in the slightest degree out of sorts should immediately have recourse to quinine. In my own case a five-grain tabloid is usually sufficient to remove the feeling of lassitude, perhaps accompanied

by yawning, which is the first symptom of approaching fever.

Apart from my own private case I carried two boxes of prepared medicines for my own people. Medicines were always in great request amongst the chiefs, who were continually begging me to dose them. I think that in some cases it was done merely out of jealousy, as before leaving a town where I had dosed a chief who was a little sick, and arriving at the next town which was some distance off, the news had already preceded me, and one of the first things the chief said was that he would like me to give him some white man's medicine. I was then on my way down country, and my stock was nearly finished; so I told him that I had nothing that I could give him to take internally, but that if he wanted anything for external application I might be able to oblige him. He said it was quite immaterial what medicine I gave him; but that as I had given medicine to the chief at the other town, it was absolutely necessary that he too should have some, in order that his prestige might not suffer in the eyes of the people.

I have referred to the need of interpreters where the language is an unwritten one. Unless one can understand a little—sufficient to let your interpreter know that he is liable to be caught up if he makes mistakes—one is frequently placed in a very awkward position. My own method at political meetings was to repeat the same question in a varied form. The facial expressions of the chiefs, which I carefully watched, and my own knowledge of the language, very imperfect though it was, was still helpful, enabled me to know when I heard their answers whether they quite understood what was being said to them.

The following anecdote, told to me by a Mendi missionary educated in America, and speaking excellent English, will suffice to show what very ridiculous mistakes can be made by ignorant interpreters.

One of the European superintendents of the Mission was preaching on a particular Sunday morning, and the translation of his sermon was to be made by a Mendi interpreter. The text was, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" which was rendered as "Salt, Salt, which way they do put you in the soup and you no dey catch?" in other words, "Salt, Salt, how is it when you are put into the soup you do not season it?" So that the importance of a proper interpretation is absolutely indispensable in dealing with the people; but until European officials have at least some little knowledge of the intricacies of these unwritten languages, they must always be, in a very great measure, at the mercy of their native interpreters. This ought not to be the case; for native interpreters know too well the unique position which they occupy, a position open to many abuses in the hands of unscrupulous persons.

Food is another great difficulty. On one occasion I recollect being desperately hungry, my only provisions being dry biscuits and tea, to be supplemented by anything that I could purchase going through the country; and coming to a town about noon I told the chief of my starved condition, and requested him to be good enough to provide me, if possible, with a few hens' eggs.

He promised to do his best, and personally searched the town, returning with three eggs, the sight of which immediately refreshed me; I stood over my cook while he boiled those eggs, and had four dry cabin biscuits and

a little salt ready to eat with them. At last they were cooked, and I proceeded to break the first, but to my dismay I found that it was bad ; I cracked the second, it was no better ; and the third was, if possible, worse. My spirits dropped ; I gave back those three eggs to the chief, who expressed his great regret ; but nothing more was to be got, so I again had recourse to my dry biscuits, washed down by my usual beverage, cold weak tea, with which my water bottle was filled each morning, as I found that was the best thing to allay thirst. Having finished my repast, sitting in the open barri, with the usual crowd of town people gazing at my every action, I gave instructions to my head carrier to proceed ; but three of the men being missing, a search was made for them, when they were discovered endeavouring to come to terms with the owner for the purchase of these three rotten eggs, which they were unable to effect ; they therefore had to leave them, and we went forward on our way.

#### COUNTRY PALAVER.

Before the introduction of the Protectorate ordinance, when the administration of the country was entirely in the hands of the chiefs, all these chiefs had the power of adjusting country palavers ; and although those powers are now very much curtailed they still exercise considerable authority. It is well that this should be the case, as they are responsible to the Government for the proper supervision of their people and for the peace of the country.

They still settle many of those country palavers that it is unnecessary to bring before the Protectorate courts—



although, if there is dissatisfaction with their verdict, appeal can always be made to the Commissioner.

A complainant when going to the chief in the first instance "to show the palaver" has to shake hands with something to the value of four or five shillings. After this he presents four small pieces of leaf tobacco to one of the chief's people, with the request that he will inform the chief that complainant wishes to *konani*—i.e., to show his palaver or complaint. If the tobacco is accepted, he is told that the chief will hear the palaver, if convenient, at once, or he may be told to come in a day or two.

The chief hears the outline of the case, and directs complainant to summons. Fees, according to the value of the palaver, are next paid in kind or in some other way to the chief, who then sends for the defendant. If he does not come he is fined or brought tied. On his arrival he has to put down a similar sum to that complainant has paid. Witnesses are produced, the palaver is talked and settled upon evidence in the *barri* or court-house.

"Giving the right bone" (*Tehmu gareh*). When a palaver is settled by the chief to whom it had been referred, the person in whose favour it is decided receives from the other a cloth or some other present as the "right bone." The loser thereby acknowledges that he is in the wrong. Afterwards the adjustment of the palaver as to damages is discussed and settled in the *barri*.

#### GREETING.

The method of ordinary greeting between persons who are known as freeborn—that is, who are not born in slavery—is by the placing of the right hands, palm to palm side-

ways, and then drawing them away twice very quickly; the second time a fillip is made together at the tips of the fingers, causing a sharp snapping sound—the louder the better. Slaves merely cringe up and place their two hands one on each side of their master's hand, and draw them back slowly without the fillip, while the head is bowed. The custom of kissing seems to be entirely unknown. Asking pardon of a superior is making obeisance by dropping down on the hands and knees in front of the offended person, who then places his hand upon the offender's shoulder in token of forgiveness.

## CHAPTER VII

### INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS—THE OIL PALM

THE whole of the Sherbro and its Hinterland is enormously rich in indigenous productions; but the oil palm, both in quantity and value, far exceeds everything else. The tree is met throughout the country in large quantities; but in some places it forms great forests that are practically inexhaustible. In fact it would be impossible to exaggerate the number of oil palms in the country. I have been through places where nothing grew or would grow except these trees. They appear to me to be able to thrive anywhere. I have seen them flourishing in a sandy soil near the sea as luxuriantly as in the more fertile districts of the interior. Both of the forests shown in Figures 16 and 17 are situated within a mile of the Atlantic, one on the Turner Peninsula and the other at Sulima.

The fruit of this tree is the great palm cone. The centre cone in the illustration (Figure 15) weighed  $17\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. The nuts are thickly set in a spiky casing on the exterior, and from this particular cone no less than 784 nuts were obtained. A tree will produce up to eight or nine of these cones.



Fig. 15.—CONES OF PALM NUTS, AS THEY ARE CUT.  
The Centre Cone weighed 17½ lbs.



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Fig. 16.—OIL PALM FOREST ON TURNER'S PENINSULA, SHERBRO.







*[To face page 64]*

Fig. 17.—ASCENDING AN OIL PALM TO CUT DOWN THE CONES,  
TURNER'S PENINSULA, SHERBRO.

The nuts do not all ripen simultaneously ; they can be cut three times a year. The nuts when ripe are an orange red ; and unless they are quite ripe when gathered they yield little or no palm oil.

The oil palm attains a great height. The cone grows on a short thick stem, at the base of the leaves that crown the very top of the tree. The cutting of the cone is quite a work of art, or at least of skill. I have often watched with both interest and amusement the agile way in which an expert native performs this somewhat dangerous operation.

Figure 17 shows the native "steeple-jack" at work. He ascends the tree with what is known as a cane "climber," called in Mendi, the native language, *baru*. This climber is made of rattans bent to the required oblong form and firmly fastened at the ends. The cane encircles both the tree and the man. The man plants his feet against the stem of the tree, throws his weight against the other end of the climber and by a series of jerks quickly arrives at the top. It is done with such rapidity that it looks as if he were walking up the tree—a most curious effect. Having reached the top with the digger (a long stick with a sort of iron chisel at the end) fastened to his side, and a short matchet stuck in his belt or held between his teeth, both his hands having been hitherto engaged with the climber—stretched out at his full length, his feet still firmly pressed against the tree, his hands, no longer required for the jerk, now free, he proceeds to lift up with his digger the heavy cones, which he hacks off with his matchet, and they fall to the ground. His work finished, he descends by another series of jerks and at once begins on the next tree.

It looks dangerous, but I have heard of very few



accidents. The cones are collected, taken to the fakai, or village, where they are given over to the women, whose business it is to express the oil, which they do by the following process :—

The cones are kept for a few days until the nuts shrink and drop out.

A word on the nut itself is here necessary. The actual kernel is enclosed in a hard shell ; but this hard-shelled kernel is itself enclosed in a skin of about the same consistency as that of a chestnut. Between this outer skin and the hard inner shell there is a porous packing saturated with oil to such an extent that on breaking the outer skin with the nail the oil will ooze out.

As soon as the nuts are out of the cone they are spread on mats and sunned for two days more, when they are boiled in water, either in imported three-legged iron cauldrons, or in native earthenware pots.

When sufficiently cooked they are placed in a wooden mortar and well pounded with a heavy six-foot pole, to break the outer skin and disengage the oil from the fibre.

In a few minutes there is a mass of soft pulp, but much of the fibre is still adhering to the hard-shelled nut. The whole mass is turned into a small dug-out canoe containing plenty of hot water.

The women then rub the nuts and fibre between their hands until all the oil has come away and is floating on the surface.

The oil is next re-boiled to get rid of the little water that may be with it.

During the re-boiling the oil naturally floats to the top, is skimmed off by means of small calabashes and turned



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**Fig. 18.—NATIVE WOMEN EXPRESSING PALM OIL AT A FAKAI BY BOILING THE PALM NUTS IN THREE-LEGGED IRON CAULDRONS. TURNER'S PENINSULA, SHERBRO.**



into any receptacle that will hold it, to be taken down the river to the traders and merchants for sale. This trade oil is of a dirty yellow colour, owing to the nuts having been kept for some time before being worked. For their own domestic purposes the women make from the fibre of the fresh nut an oil of a bright red colour, which they prepare with greater care.

The oil having been expressed from the fibre, the nuts themselves are next dealt with. They are removed from the bottom of the dug-out, sunned until completely dry, when the shell is easily cracked by a couple of slight, sharp blows. The kernels are then collected and sold to the mercantile firms or to the itinerating traders either for cash or for imported goods in barter.

The oil from the kernels is never expressed in the country; the kernels leave Africa as kernels. What is known in commerce as "Palm kernel oil" is manufactured in Europe, as crushing machinery is required.

It is interesting to observe that the nut produces two distinct oils—the palm oil from the fibre, which is of an orange-red colour and thick, is used for railway grease, soap, candles and in tin-plate working, while the kernel oil is thin and of a whitey-grey used for lubricating.

Some idea may be formed of the commercial value of this great natural production from the latest statistics. The total quantity exported from the Colony during 1899 amounted to 20,058 tons, of which Sherbro contributed no less than 13,553 tons.

Every nut is cracked by hand between two stones, and as I have ascertained by actual weighing that an average pound contains 388 palm kernels it follows that 11,779,183,360 nuts must have been cracked to obtain

the quantity exported from Sherbro alone. This manual labour seems a great waste of time that could be more profitably devoted to the cultivation of the ground, were proper machinery for the cracking of the nuts introduced.

The tree that produces palm oil also produces PALM WINE, the only native intoxicant. *Torpor loi* is the native name for this wine. It is obtained by tapping the top, where the palm cabbage is concealed. It is really the only intoxicating liquor the country produces. When drunk quite fresh it is sweet and pleasant, with a frothy head resembling ginger beer. But after standing and fermenting its strength is greatly increased, and it then has an acrid flavour. A considerable quantity must however be taken before it makes any appreciable effect upon the native. Personally I have found one tumbler of new wine amply sufficient for me. Great quantities are consumed by the chiefs, who delight in it and who seem capable of drinking it whenever they can get it.

Up country it did not appear to me to be at all a common drink, and although brought in several times a day to the chiefs in small wooden bowls or calabashes I did not observe the ordinary people taking it; doubtless because they could not get it.

The wine exudes slowly from the trees that have been tapped into whatever is put to catch it, probably a large hollow gourd affixed to the tree stem; and, as the receptacle is left unattended, robberies often occur.

I remember being once in an up-country place, when upon going to look for his wine the owner discovered that some one had been there before him and had carefully emptied the calabash and replaced it; his excitement as he





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**Fig. 19.—THE CABBAGE FROM THE OIL PALM, SHERBRO.**

perambulated the town was too great for words. In stentorian tones he cursed the thief for all he was worth, promising "to swear him country fashion" if it was not put back. I must admit that, whatever may be the intoxicating effect, I have never to my recollection witnessed any person being in a state of inebriation from it. In the Lower Sherbro, at the large town of Bonthe especially, it is regularly hawked about by the native women, who bring it from some miles inland, and dole it out at a halfpenny a tin cup—which is generally an old condensed milk tin containing about half a pint.

The palm is none the worse for yielding man its oil and its wine; but the cutting of its cabbage kills it.

The cabbage is the core within the head of the tree. The illustration (Figure 19) shows the stems of the new leaves shooting out from the centre, and it is the bulbous part that is known as the cabbage. This cabbage when trimmed and boiled is a solid yellow block resembling in texture and taste the ordinary parsnip, the narrow neck being especially delicious and melting away in the mouth with the flavour of the finest asparagus. It is a splendid vegetable, but unfortunately to obtain it the oil palm must be destroyed.

Those who have read this chapter with due attention will, I think, be disposed to follow my example, and take off their hats to His Beneficent Majesty the Oil Palm.



## CHAPTER VIII

### INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS (*continued*)—THE RAFIA VINIFERA OR BAMBOO PALM

THE bamboo palm produces many things of the greatest use to the natives. Amongst the articles of export is a bass fibre, called in Mendi, the principal native language, *kajeh*, but known commercially as piassava, which is obtained from the fleshy base of the old leaves that surround this palm. The stem is not of the tall and leafless description of the stately oil palm that towers over all the vegetation with which the land is covered, except its rival, the huge silk cotton tree. Piassava is prepared in the following way: the thick base, or the leaf stalk, of the leaves is cut up into sections of about four feet in length and placed in water for fourteen days or so to soften and decompose. These lengths are then removed and well pounded without breaking the fibre; this helps to disintegrate it within the pulpy mass, and enables the fibrous threads to be readily drawn out. When that is done the threads are pulled singly by hand through a slit in a freshly cut piece of bamboo cane, so cleansing the fibre from all the adhesive pulp. It then appears in the condition seen in bass brooms, and after

being tied up in bundles is ready for the market. It goes without saying that the quantity which could be obtained is illimitable ; but for some reason or another the demand in England is not equal to the supply.

This is regrettable, as it is in every way an industry suitable to the natives. The leaflets upon the leaves are used for making the bamboo-thatch, called in Mendi *keri yaseh*. These leaflets vary from two to three feet in length. After being removed from the midrib of the long leaf, one is taken, placed upon the ground and bent over in the middle ; another is placed alongside of it, overlapping it slightly, and is similarly bent. The two are pierced about four or five inches from the crease by a thin piece of bamboo cane, and skewered together by it. Two pieces of thicker cane, the length that it is intended to make the thatching, are then inserted, one just at the bend-over, where another stitch is made, and the next just above the first stitch. These sticks help to keep the leaflets in proper position and to stiffen them. Rapidly leaflet is joined to leaflet by this cane stitching, until thirty to thirty-four leaflets have been skewered together, which brings the entire piece to about two feet long by fifteen inches wide. Thirty such pieces constitute a bundle, and they are tied together with palm rope and sold for 2*d.* or 3*d.* a bundle. Only two cane stitches are made to join each leaflet. About 8*d.* a day can be made at this work. Bamboo is the most durable for thatching ; other kinds more commonly in use in the remoter parts are palm leaves thickly laid on as leaves, or a description of fine long grass very heavily put on ; any of these thatchings is impervious to the tropical rains. The midrib of this palm is used for rafters and ceilings for

huts, in making doors, windows, chairs, beds, country sofas, cane mats, and fishing pots. From the leaflet is produced a very fine and strong thread used in the manufacture of fishing nets ; in fact, this palm practically supplies most of the wants of the people as regards building and furnishing.

This rafia or bamboo palm is to be met with throughout the entire country, although in some places it is in greater profusion than in others. This is more particularly the case when it is found growing upon the banks of isolated rivers, where the exquisite beauty of the foliage and the diversity of colouring, both of the leaves and of the kingfishers that haunt the lower branches overhanging the water, are wonderful beyond description as the sun shines upon them. I have been through some of these unfrequented waterways, when it seemed as if I were passing through a veritable fairyland.

The graceful drooping of the rafia leaves overlapping and interlacing each other produce an effect absolutely indescribable, the charm being enhanced by the death-like stillness which prevails unbroken, or only now and again disturbed by the screaming of grey parrots flying high overhead, or the chattering of monkeys in the loftier trees. It is remarkable that wherever the foliage is particularly delicate and beautiful it is always associated with swamps and quagmires, whether in the interior or not. The river itself is often covered for miles by the leaf of the ordinary white water-lily, which floats upon its surface, while thousands are in blossom at the same time, presenting not only an extraordinary, but a most refreshing sight. As I passed along and saw the oars from my boat ruthlessly destroying these lovely flowers, I could not help feeling what a desecration it was.

## KOLA NUTS (MENDI, TUREH).

One of the most remarkable natural productions in the Sherbro is the kola nut. This nut is chiefly exported as a commercial article to the Gambia and to Senegal, where it realises a high price. It has a very bitter taste, and is considered by the natives a preventative against thirst. When making long interior journeys they carry it with them for this purpose. It is also said to prevent sleep, therefore it is in request amongst watchmen and such people. The kola tree grows to a considerable size, and the pods may be seen hanging down from its heavy foliage. Some of the pods are six or seven inches in length, and may contain as many as twelve or fifteen nuts. The pod itself when fresh is a thick, fleshy substance, of a dark green colour, with a divisional line. Upon opening this pod the nuts are disclosed inside, dovetailed as it were into each other, so beautifully do they fit. There is no hard shell surrounding the nuts, but each is enveloped in a waxy, white skin ; upon this being peeled off a solid pink nut is seen. These nuts are of various shapes and sizes. The packing of the nuts for export takes a good deal of time, as they are delicate and very liable to become affected by a small insect, which bores into the nut and destroys it. They have to be very carefully washed and put into large country baskets of special shape, which are lined with certain kinds of leaves. The top is then again covered over with cloth or plenty of leaves, and very securely tied up. A strong cane ring is affixed to the top of these heavy baskets to enable them to be easily shipped without being unnecessarily knocked about. The kola trade is entirely in the hands of the women—chiefly the

Sierra Leone women, who penetrate considerable distances into the country to collect this much sought after article of commerce. So great indeed is the exodus of these women from the Sherbro during the kola season that it materially affects the population for the time being. This goes on year after year. An idea may be gathered of the value of this industry by the export returns from the Colony of Sierra Leone for the last four years.

	cwt.	qrs.	lbs.		£	s.	d.
1896 . . .	9,912	2	18 . . .	Value	38,852	4	10
1897 . . .	12,716	1	16 . . .	„	46,551	18	5
1898 . . .	10,795	1	21 . . .	„	49,670	11	3
1899 . . .	9,616	3	6 . . .	„	61,455	12	6

The falling off in quantity for the last two years may probably be attributed to the native disturbances which occurred in 1898, and from an unwillingness on the part of the women traders to go about the country. But that cause having now been removed, there seems every possibility of a satisfactory increase, as this is a trade in every way suited to the Sierra Leone women, and equally so to the country people. It is one they like, and which is capable of unlimited extension by the simple planting of trees. Although the quantity shipped in the last return is slightly less than that quoted for 1896, it will be observed that its value was more than £23,000 in excess of it, showing what a very much higher price the nuts realised. In the shipments for 1899, with the exception of 189½ cwt., nearly the entire quantity went to the Gambia and the Senegal ports. A single kola tree will bear a yearly crop up to £2 in value.





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Fig. 20. A CAMWOOD TREE, UPPER MENDI.

## THE CAMWOOD TREE

On leaving Sulima for the Hinterland, the camwood tree is almost immediately observed and is never lost again. This grand tree, which should be of great commercial value, attains a very considerable height, as the picture (Figure 20) will show. I myself cut down one which measured sixty feet.

It has a dense foliage. The centre, or heart-wood, is of a lovely orange, that upon exposure darkens to a deep red, and is surrounded by a thick sap-wood which is useless. The red heart-wood is so extremely close and hard that it can with difficulty be cut with an ordinary axe, and so heavy that it can only be carried down and shipped in very short billets, from which, in England, a dye is extracted.

Of course, with suitable means of transport, long lengths might be exported, and these should prove invaluable for veneers, as it is a wood of extremely beautiful colour, and takes a high polish. It is a pleasant sight to see these great trees when in bloom, for they are then one mass of small white flowers, reminding one of the sweet-pea blossom ; and with some fragrance too, which is rather rare, for out here flowers are not generally noted for their perfume.

When I was at the town of Bande Wuru (Little Bande), in the Tungia country, which is on the top of a hill in a mountainous region, I asked Sembe, the paramount chief, if he would kindly procure me a good staff, to assist me in climbing over the mountains. He at once went off and returned with a piece of camwood ten or twelve feet long, which I had shortened and then scraped with bits of a



broken glass bottle, until it became a respectable shape, and it proved very trustworthy and serviceable. This identical staff may now be seen in the museum of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, together with several sections of camwood.

The small billets shipped to England do not fairly represent the qualities of this beautiful wood ; but some idea may be gathered of the lengths that can be obtained from the fact that nearly all of the forty posts used in the construction of the principal barri in Chief Kai Lundu's town of Kanri Lahun were solid baulks of camwood, each about twelve feet in height by six to eight inches in diameter.

The beauty of the wood, however, is lost in these posts ; it soon becomes so dark and dirt-begrimed that it is hardly distinguishable from any other kind of wood. The natives merely select it as being harder and more durable than other wood, and regard it simply as ordinary timber.

No botanist has been through this Mendi country, but as mahogany has of late years formed a considerable and valuable article of export from the Gold Coast, I do not know why we should not also have it in the Sherbro Hinterland ; but, at present, we really do not know from a scientific standpoint what valuable woods may some day be discovered here ; all we know is that Sherbro was formerly a great teak exporting country, until the introduction of iron into ship-building, and that the exportation of it then ceased. The timber seen in Lower Sherbro in the hands of native carpenters, and used in house-building and boat-making, shows a great variety, especially in colouring, much of it being hard wood ; but it is always used as soon as it is sawn, consequently, as it is not





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FIG. 21. -COUNTRY DUG-OUT CANOES, SHERRRO.

seasoned, no place of native build looks well. The boards are frequently warped and split even before they are put up, and exposure to the sun very soon gets them completely out of shape. Of course this only applies to places where carpenters are available, many bearing that name being mere bush workers ; and in the upper country boards are not used at all—indeed, are not known, doors and shutters, where there are any, being simply the palm canes put side by side, and sewn together with fibrous string. In the up-country nails and tools are quite unknown.

Many of the small dug-out canoes are made from the trunks of the cotton tree. This is a soft wood and easily worked, but such canoes are not lasting, and they very soon assume quite fantastic shapes, as will be noticed in Figure 21. It is no uncommon sight to see canoes being propelled when the bow or stern is entirely absent, and also large pieces missing from the sides.

Some of the canoes depicted were used to convey my carriers, my escort and myself, with all my loads, along this piece of water. It was only a short piece of water, about a mile long, practically a stagnant swamp. The canoes were very small, some having only room for two men. The canoe that I went in had only the paddler besides myself. How the people managed to carry over my big packages, including my large canopied hammock, was a mystery. Of course several journeys had to be made before everything was taken over, and when I saw those canoes leaving I must admit that I had very grave fears about the loads reaching the other side in safety ; but, fortunately, no mishap occurred, although that was a considerable swamp, and took some time to cross. The shadows reflected in the water will show the brightness of

the day. I took the photographs in April of last year (1900), when the heat was terrific.

Figure 22 shows the other end of this swamp, some tiny islets will be seen on the right. These were entirely covered with a mass of ferns, so beautiful that it is impossible for me even to attempt to describe them. Going through such natural loveliness, the solemn silence broken only by the delicate dip of the single paddle propelling my canoe, produced an extraordinary feeling. The term "fairyland" does not give even a fair impression of the dainty delicacy of the scene. It was more than that—but there I must leave it.

The stern of the actual canoe that I used is seen in the right of the picture.

#### FOREST FERNERIES

The monotony of bush travelling in the interior is now and again delightfully relieved by coming upon—often quite unexpectedly—a fairyland of inconceivable beauty. Some few travellers have already written of this marvel; but others, who have not been so fortunate as to see it for themselves, have called in question its existence.

I am among the fortunate ones, and have seen it very frequently. This fairyland consists of a forest of palmettos, ranging in height from quite low trees up to, say, 30 feet, each tree and intervening shrub being entirely enveloped in masses of a delicate fern resembling our own favourite, the maidenhair.

It would be quite impossible for me to describe the charm of these dainty works of nature. Even my own native boys—usually quite indifferent to natural beauty—



Fig 22.—TROPICAL FOLIAGE.

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will gaze amazed at this profusion of loveliness—this combination of strength and size with extreme delicacy.

To the charm of these stately fern-adorned trees is sometimes added silent pools covered with exquisite white lilies, their blossoms standing up by the hundred on their brown-green stems.

Amid this pure loveliness of lily and frond, innumerable butterflies, in endless variety and of the most gorgeous colouring, dart to and fro, in, as it seems, the very exuberance of their happiness and freedom. In the brilliant rays of the tropical sun they shine like jewels, but with a life, a movement, a flexibility that jewels never have. Some, opals of wonderful transparency and ever-changing hues ; others with wings of lapis lazuli, or of the very sky itself, or of the brightest vermilion thrown into relief by black spots, and all of form as wonderful as their colour and in endless variety.

Whether swallow-tailed, long and tapering, or short and rounded, every form is elegance itself, even down to the smaller insects of quieter colour, with their long and delicately pointed streamers ; and all worthy of a minute and careful study I was unable to give them.

In their kaleidoscopic colouring, perfect symmetry, delicacy and variety, the flowers of these regions vie with the butterflies ; but perhaps it is the exquisite foliage of the vegetation itself that to my mind has the most abiding charm. Indeed, I think there is nothing more entrancing when alone in these vast solitudes, which the foot of man so rarely treads, than a close observation of tropical vegetation. The strange unfolding of gigantic leaves has a special fascination for me. Some of them have the most extraordinary way of packing themselves up. I had, for



instance, often noticed on the flowering shrubs what I took for some time to be mere bundles of leaves tied up for fetish by the natives with the fibrous string they use. I was so accustomed to see fetish bundles hanging about everywhere that this idea was quite natural.

I found later that these apparent bundles were not fetish but large unopened leaves tightly curled up, the flexible midrib looking as if it were string wound round and round a package.

The study of the works of Nature is always and everywhere a ceaseless delight and education to me ; but here, in the immense African forests, life is on a scale both so vast and so beautiful that even the most unobservant person is forced to stand still and marvel.

I have called these remote forest glades fairylands. I might, with perhaps greater truth, use the term sanctuaries—where, encompassed only by the wonderful and silent creations of a power transcending all imagination, the human being who has wandered into them is conscious most of all of the presence of the Divine and beneficent Architect of this surpassingly marvellous world. They are in very deed “temples not made by hand,” in which the solitary stranger feels, although he may not utter the words : “God—Thou art.”

It is one thing to learn when a child :

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air ;

but when you march for days through beauty absolutely untouched by man, and without his aid astoundingly perfect, you become greatly humbled.

You arrive as a man who has dwelt, perhaps, in cities numbering their inhabitants by millions. You have instinctively the feeling that in this world everything is made for man, and here you find brought home to you gently, but with unanswerable force, the fact that the world can do without you and your fellows very well indeed; that, indeed, it has done without you ever since it was a world at all.

The "J. P. Robinsons," who think "the world will go right if they holler out 'Gee'," should make the acquaintance of these African solitudes; they would certainly be put in the way of being taught a much needed lesson; whether they would learn it is another matter.

For here I will honestly confess that it occurred to me when watching the sportive flutterings of the gem-like butterflies, that having the distinguished honour of displaying their perfections to the admiring gaze of a white man for once in their existence, they showed themselves off to the very best advantage, for the express purpose of gratifying both their visitor and their own vanity.

Ferns of several kinds are seen all over the country in great profusion. The ordinary bracken is quite common in some localities, and certain trees are so encrusted with ferns that their trunks are all but concealed by the drooping fronds.

But, perhaps, some of the strangest and most impressive things are the curiously gnarled limbs of the trees, especially those of the majestic silk cotton tree, and the extraordinary contortions of the thick vines that swoop down upon them from the topmost boughs.

There is something about both vine and tree that fills

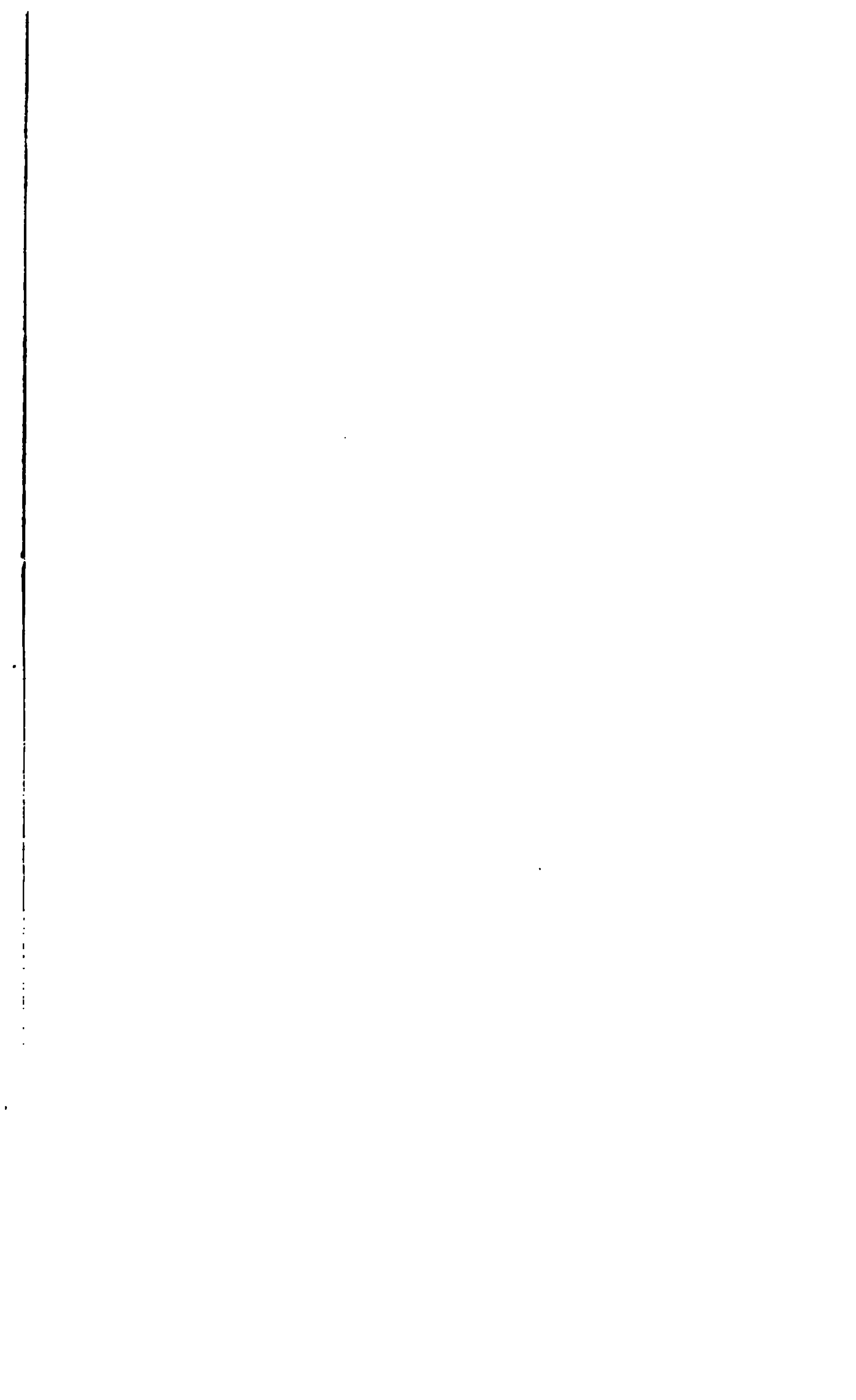
one with positive amazement, and makes one wonder whether, like the people of the country, they too have not for ages been engaged in perpetual conflict, so weirdly antagonistic is the attitude each assumes towards the other.

I must repeat that the cotton tree is, indeed, majestic. The sharp angles of its limbs are also most peculiar; they have outline all their own, that I have not noticed in any other form of vegetable life. This sharpness of drawing is the first point that strikes one. Then there is the great girth of the trunk, and the wide-spreading heavy top. Tall and mighty buttresses radiate from the trunks at sharp angles, crossing paths of tracks and losing themselves in the dense undergrowth. They are, of course, inconvenient to meet. Frequently they are so high that the carriers cannot get over them with their loads, and have to be assisted; and if you are in a hammock you must get down and scramble over the best way you can. But, unpleasant as they may be as obstacles, they certainly enhance the wild grandeur of the scenery. During the dries the cotton tree is completely bare of leaves. The photograph from which Figure 23 is reproduced was taken in the month of March, when not a leaf was to be seen. The little dots with which it is covered are the pods containing a fluffy silk, that was then being blown all over the place. This silk is of too short a staple for weaving, but it ought to be of commercial value, as it is useful locally for stuffing pillows; at present, however, it is neither collected nor exported. The cotton tree must not be confounded with the well-known cotton shrub.



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**Fig. 23 -A SILK COTTON TREE WITHOUT FOLIAGE, BUT WITH A MASS OF SILKY PODS. TURNER'S PENINSULA, SHERRRO.**



Clumps of real bamboo are now and again met, but they are not particular favourites, as they afford exceptionally good cover for snakes. The thicker canes, when cut into short sections, make excellent receptacles for water, palm wine, or palm oil.

Figure 50 shows a cotton tree in full leaf, taken in April.

## CHAPTER IX

### INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS : RUBBER <sup>1</sup>

THE rubber vine, called in the Mendi language *Jehn-Jeh*, which is found throughout the country wherever vegetation is big and tall, especially in forests, is a species of *Landolphia*. It attains a great height, and I have seen it at times as thick as three to four inches in diameter, although its usual workable stem is only about an inch and a quarter. I found on visiting Upper Mendi that the people knew absolutely nothing about the properties of rubber, but they knew the vine, and that if they made an incision in it, a milky fluid would ooze out.

In some of the towns I spoke to the people of the great importance of their turning their attention to the making this fluid into rubber. I showed sundry articles made of rubber, such as waterproof sheeting, the soles of boots and so on, which surprised them, as they had not the slightest idea that there was any use at all for it. I also assured them that it was much wanted in England, and that the merchants in Sherbro would pay them good prices for it. I gave them a few empty bottles and told them to fetch

<sup>1</sup> Rubber is an article of commerce for which, just now, the demand is so great that it must have a chapter to itself.

me some of the milk. They soon returned with the bottles full of the rubber milk. This I boiled in my small frying-pan until it became of the consistency of porridge. I then put it between two coarse mats, squeezed out the water, and shaped it into a block, which I allowed to dry. When dry there was a small solid slab of pure white rubber. After some days' exposure to the air, it began to darken, and ultimately became quite black, and, as it darkened, more elastic.

The people were deeply interested and said they should like to do something with the rubber, but—as usual—no practical result could follow because of the distance from the coast and the want of transport,—that great, ever-recurring difficulty.

Only a very small proportion of the rubber exported from the Colony comes from Sherbro, although the vine is plentiful all through the country. A very great decrease in the rubber exportation from the Colony has taken place of late, as the following table will show :—

	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>qrs.</i>	<i>lbs.</i>		<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
1896 . . . . .	13,316	3	8	value	79,195	19	7
1897 . . . . .	11,658	2	11	„	79,786	17	5
1898 . . . . .	5,801	0	5	„	52,504	6	9
1899 . . . . .	4,882	3	17	„	43,729	18	0

This decrease may be in some degree accounted for by the fact that much of the rubber exported comes from the Susu country, north of Sierra Leone, and a French possession. Most of this trade is now diverted, and the rubber shipped direct from the French port of Konakri. It seems a great pity that the natives of the Sherbro Hinterland are not more encouraged by the merchants to develop the



rubber trade than they seem to be ; but the one universal cry with the trader is “ palm kernels ”—“ palm kernels ”—“ palm kernels ! ”

It seems to me that now the Government has opened up the country, merchants, traders and natives might benefit enormously, by developing their commercial relations with the interior people for the expansion of the rubber trade. Obviously it would be worth the while of the natives of the upper countries of the Sherbro Hinterland to make rubber and carry it down to the trading stations, even from the remotest limits of the Protectorate, if they were urged to do so by the mercantile community and encouraged by good prices. At present a native load of palm kernels, about a bushel, carried down from the nearer distances, realises to the carrier 4s. A similar weight in rubber at a shilling a pound should bring the carrier 4/., so that he could well afford to carry so precious a load a further distance. I am told that the demand for rubber is rapidly increasing, and that it is of great importance to obtain a sufficient supply. Then why, may I ask, is all this indigenous wealth in the Sherbro Hinterland left entirely unworked? Want of enterprise, seems to be the answer to that question.





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Fig. 24.—A BANANA PLANT, SHOWING THE BUNCH OF FRUIT AND YOUNG SHOOTS AROUND THE STEM. THIS BUNCH CONTAINED ABOUT 200 BANANAS. BONTHE, SIERRA

## CHAPTER X

### FRUITS

#### THE BANANA

THE Sherbro is a land of fruits, the principal, of course, being the banana. The banana is not, strictly speaking, indigenous, as it requires to be planted.

Bananas seem to thrive anywhere and everywhere. I am even growing them luxuriantly in my compound, which is a sandy soil and not fifty feet from the river side, where the water is salt. Figure 24 is from a photograph of a banana plant within this ground, and it gives a very good idea of the way the banana grows. The bunch of fruit hanging down had certainly not less than 180 bananas on it; and so great was the weight that three days after it was photographed the tree broke down under it. This particular tree was planted about a year before from a small sucker. The banana produces only one bunch of fruit, but it is most prolific, as young plants shoot up from the bottom, in their turn producing fruit and suckers, as shown in the picture, so that very soon a great cluster of plants is seen.

The growing of bananas for the export market appears to me to be worth serious consideration.

It is only within the last few years that the banana has

reached the English coster's barrow, on which it has attained a rapidly growing popularity.

At present the supply comes chiefly from Madeira and the Canary Islands ; but this supply, enormous as it is, is as nothing to that which the Sherbro alone could yield. The district could, in fact, provide this delicious and sustaining fruit in quantities that are simply illimitable.

In the Islands banana cultivation is expensive. In the Sherbro it costs practically nothing. Once planted it goes on reproducing itself, and, as nature does everything for it, human attention is not required at all.

The present local price of a very fine bunch of bananas, such as the one shown, is sixpence, and no doubt this could be reduced were the banana cultivated in greater quantities as an article of commerce. The only drawback that I can see to the exporting of Sherbro fruits is the want of quick and regular steam transport. What is needed is a service of small steamers specially fitted for fruit-carrying.

With bananas, of course, may be included that larger and coarser description known as plantains, and much used on the Coast as a vegetable.

#### THE PINE-APPLE

The pine-apple, perhaps, is even more prolific than the banana, because it is an indigenous plant which is in no way cultivated by the people, and grows absolutely wild. One may traverse miles of country of which both sides of the pathway are fringed by these plants, and, naturally, if some very slight attention were given in the way of cultivation, practically any quantity of pine-apples could be grown. The plants are very large, and sometimes four or





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Fig. 25.—COCOA NUT PALM IN FULL BEARING, SHEKRO.

five pines may be seen upon one plant. The drawback for table decoration is that, tops not being looked after, they do not always grow straight ; and sometimes in the place of the handsome crown with which we are familiar, there is merely a coarse short growth of little leaves.

The price of pine-apples in Sherbro is about a halfpenny ; but upon an occasion, when I was at Sulima, I remember my cook coming to me one morning to inform me that a canoe had just arrived at the river-side laden with pine-apples, which the people had refused to buy because they said they were too dear. He stated that the price was eight for "two copper" (one penny), but the people wanted twelve for that money. I said that personally I was satisfied with the price, and I gave him threepence, with instructions to get me two dozen. He went away and returned with two dozen of the finest pine-apples that I had ever seen in Western Africa. Many of those pine-apples I am satisfied would have realised ten or twelve shillings in England, could they but have been transported there in the condition they were then in. It is almost incredible that no enterprising firm has seriously considered the question of canning pine-apples, because it seems that there would be no difficulty in the way of carrying out such a commercial industry after the natives had been given to understand that they could cultivate the fruit as an article of trade, and make money out of it.

#### THE COCOA-NUT

The cocoa-nut is another prolific fruit. It grows anywhere near the sea, but is not found many miles from the Coast. A chief, coming down country with me one day to



Sulima with his following, we stopped for a short time at the town of Juring, about four miles from the sea. Here we saw a great number of picked cocoa-nuts, which were offered for sale ; and, as this chief had never seen such things before, he purchased the entire quantity. Little seems to be done with the cocoa-nut beyond using it for local consumption, the natives, seemingly, being very partial to it. It is to be regretted that the natives do not pay more attention to the growth of the cocoa-nut palm, as copra—the flesh of the nut sun-dried—might easily be prepared and shipped.

#### MANGOES

Mangoes are very common all about the Lower Sherbro ; but although the fruit is very delicious and plentiful, owing to its delicacy, I almost think it would not bear a long sea journey ; although I did once succeed in getting some to England in a very fine condition. The peach mango is a large and most luscious fruit, of the same colour as the ordinary pink peach. Figure 26 will show what an abundance of fruit grows upon a tree. Frequently clusters of from ten to twenty mangoes may be seen hanging from the end of a bough, the weight being sometimes so great as to completely break it down. These trees will grow to a considerable height, and are very massive and full of foliage, with a graceful, long lanceolated leaf. Towards the dry season a very remarkable change takes place in parts of the foliage, the leaves changing in patches from a rich dark green to a golden bronze, which, when seen under a tropical sun, displays a variety of tints that is exceedingly beautiful. How often



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**Fig. 26.—A MANGO TREE IN FULL BEARING. BUNDU, SHERBRO**



I have looked at these leaves (which only retain this bronze for a few days, and then revert to their former green) and thought how much they would be appreciated, and what a high price they would fetch for decorative purposes in Covent Garden. It will be noticed in the photograph of the halt that some of my carriers are quietly sitting down in the foreground. I need scarcely say that had the mangoes been ripe enough to eat, the lower boughs would soon have been stripped.

Among the remaining fruits may be named sweet and bitter oranges, limes in profusion, guavas, cuchus, sapadillas, granadillas, melons, sour-sops, pau-paus, rough skin plums, not omitting the alligator or avocardo pear. This pear can hardly be called a fruit, as it is in reality much more of a vegetable. Some of the pears grow to six or seven inches long, about three inches in diameter. The inside contains a large, hard seed, which is something like a chestnut, but very much larger. This is enveloped in a loose thin skin, and around this when ripe is a delicious creamy substance, of the consistency of an ordinary English pear, the whole having a thin outer skin of a dark green or dark brown colour, according to the sort. The pear is cut in two, the seed removed, which leaves a good sized cavity ; it is then usual to take mustard, pepper, salt, vinegar, and Worcester sauce, and to mix them together in this natural salad bowl. Having stirred well, the pulpy part is broken out, the whole mixed within its own skin, and eaten with a spoon. It is not everybody who likes this, and it is quite an acquired taste. Those who do like it, thoroughly enjoy it.

## CHAPTER XI

### CULTIVATED CROPS

#### RICE (MENDI, BEH)

THE cultivation of rice throughout the country is of paramount importance, as it forms one of the staple articles of food for the people. Europeans who have tasted this country rice have always appreciated it; it is so sweet, so full of nourishment, and so sustaining. Of its nutritive qualities there can be no possible doubt when one sees the magnificent physique of many of the men and observes their great powers of endurance. I have frequently noticed this amongst my own men, particularly the boatmen, whose muscles when they are rowing show an enormous development that has often called forth the admiration of any Europeans who may have been in the boat with me. I have known these men to pull continuously for twelve hours on end without a murmur, and yet their food consists only of rice, fish and cassada. It is a pity that this rice is not better known in England, because I am satisfied that it would very soon find favour if the prejudice against its appearance could be overcome. Owing to the primitive way in which it is cleaned, most of it does not look as white as that imported from India or

America ; but speaking for myself I can only say that whereas I could not look at imported rice I invariably have African rice on my table at the more important meals, and I am able to partake of it with thorough enjoyment. I cannot speak too highly of the nutritive properties of this country-grown rice, and I should like to see a market for it in England. I frequently send a little home for the use of my own family, as they have learned to prefer it to other rice ; all who have tasted it have expressed their satisfaction. I should like it to be also remembered that by finding a market for this rice profitable employment would be provided for vast numbers of the natives.

There are several kinds of rice grown, amongst the principal being the following :

*Kokovaia*, i.e. scattering ears—grows anywhere.

*Bongo*. A short thick grain—planted in mud.

*Jorboi*—long seed, sweet flavour.

*Vubateh*, or bagibeh—plentiful grains in the ears.

*Wuja-wuru*. Small grain—black.

*Paveh*. Tasteless rice.

*Tupu-bongoi*. Striped rice.

*Goro-fele*. Baboon or long-haired rice.

The mode of cultivation is the same in all cases.

After the seed is sown boys and girls about the farm are employed to drive off the birds. This ceases when the seed begins to show through the ground. About a month later weeding begins, and in the second month, when the ears are filling out for ripening, men, women and children spend their days in bird driving. Small leafy sheds of the most primitive kind are erected about the rice fields, some being on the ground, while others are put upon a rudely

constructed platform raised on posts eight to ten feet high. The children are armed with a sling, and from these elevations they let fly stones at the birds, which otherwise would make terrible ravages amongst the growing crops. These precautions must be continued until the rice is harvested.

To reap the rice a native-made knife is generally used, or the outer part of a piece of bamboo cane which will take a good edge. When harvested it is tied up into short sheaves and placed beneath the thatched roof of a special native hut called "buwila," under which a log fire is kept kindled night and day for the purpose of drying the rice.

Winnowing is performed by threshing or by treading out the ears by the human foot; when this is done the rice is put into water, where it remains over night, and next morning it is parboiled, taken out and spread on mats in the sun to dry. Then, as the illustration (Figure 27) shows, it is pounded by women in wooden mortars and continually fanned to remove the husks, until the rice is sufficiently clean; the little adhering husk remaining no doubt adding to its nutritive properties and to its flavour. This primitive method of cleaning naturally causes considerable waste and also breaks up the grains in great measure.

Rice that is grown in swampy and damp ground is called potta-potta rice. It is planted in April, weeded during April and May, and ready for cutting in June; but this is not a heavy crop, as it is generally only raised for the use of the planter's family until the time when the heavy dry-land crops shall be available. These dry-land crops are planted about the beginning of September and are ready for cutting in November and December. The rice-straw when the grains are drawn out by hand is used



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**Fig. 27. -NATIVE WOMEN CLEANING RICE. BONTHE, SHERRBO**





for brooms. It is also used with other things in the preparation of a potash called *lubi*, used in the manufacture of country black soap.

In planting rice in the upper country, cotton seed and guinea-corn seed are sometimes sown with it. The rice is the shortest crop in height; the guinea-corn is much taller and the cotton is a shrub eight to ten feet high. All harvesting except for cotton is over by November.

Previous to planting the ground has to be prepared. The first operation is known as "brushing farm," which consists in clearing away the small shrubs and undergrowth; then the larger trees are felled and allowed to dry; the whole is then fired and is called *mortihun*. Afterwards the place is gleaned of any pieces of wood that may be remaining, and the ground is ready for planting.

#### CASSADA

The first crop put in after a clearing is cassada, a root which is very much used by the natives as a food. It is exceedingly nutritious and may be eaten either boiled, roasted or in the raw state. In the lower country and in Sherbro proper it is used for starch and is made up into various country dishes. The cassada plant throws up long annulated stems, which are cut up into lengths of about four or five inches, and two or three of such pieces are simply stuck into a hole. This is done in March and the cassada is ready for rooting up the following December.

After the plants have come through the ground about six inches and have got a few shade leaves upon them, men commence planting the rice seed, which is protected by the foliage of the cassada. After the crops are

gathered the ground remains fallow for not less than three years, manuring being unknown.

Figure 28 shows a piece of ground in the process of being cleared for cassada planting. When it was first attacked it was simply a wilderness of low vegetation of all sorts, the young oil palms being undistinguishable from the rest of the tangle. As the cutting went on, palms here and there were revealed, and after being trimmed of their lower leaves were left to grow, producing many beautiful vistas of pointed arches, like those of a Gothic cathedral.

Figure 29 show pumpkin cultivation. As will be seen, the thatching of a whole house is entirely covered by the vine. This is a very convenient method, as it not only keeps the house cool but it prevents the pumpkins from rotting, which they are liable to do if trained along the ground.

#### COTTON

Cotton is grown all over the Mendi country, but it is only used locally in the manufacture of country cloth. For some inexplicable reason it is not cultivated as an article of export, although the growing of cotton is in every way suited both to the country and to the people. It could easily be grown to a very great extent and would not at all interfere with the labour of the men, because its cultivation would practically fall to the share of the women and children.

The clearing of the farm land and some of the planting would be all that the men would have to do. The picking would be done by the children and the ginning by the women and the children. The cotton



Fig. 28. CLEARING BUSH FOR CASSAVA CULTIVATION, THE YOUNG OIL PALMS BEING LEFT TO MATURE.  
BENDU, SHERBRO.

[To face page 96.





Fig. 29.—PUMPKIN CULTIVATION. *[To face page 96.]*



shrub grows luxuriantly and seems to require little or no attention. A few years ago I had a lot of this cotton picked at Mafweh on the Big Bum river, which I sent up to Freetown. The then Governor, Sir James Hay, forwarded it to the Colonial Office for report. From the Colonial Office it was sent to the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, who submitted it to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce for their opinion. I give here an extract from the letter of the Secretary of the Chamber to the Director at Kew:—

“ . . . . This cotton is of good quality and is worth to-day about 6*d.* per lb. in Liverpool—already about 2,300 bales per annum are imported into that port, and so acceptable is it to Lancashire spinners who have used it that they would gladly welcome a very much larger supply than is now available. There is a good demand for it, and the only complaints respecting it of which I can hear are that the supply is scanty and intermittent, and that occasionally it is not so clean and free from impurity as it should be. . . . . On behalf of the President of this Chamber I desire to thank you for the interest you have shown in this important question of cotton supply and to say that we shall be very pleased to hear from you as to the progress of the efforts which you are making for the extension of cotton culture in West Africa.” No cotton is exported from Sherbro. This report upon cotton was promulgated by the Government *in extenso* in No. 256 of the *Sierra Leone Royal Gazette* of the 31st May, 1890, for the benefit and information of all persons. It therefore seems extraordinary that the mercantile community of Sherbro, seeing how much this cotton was appreciated by the Lancashire spinners, did not do something towards



creating an export market ; but the fact remains that nothing has been done, or is being done, to give an impetus to the cultivation of an article for which the increasing supply was so earnestly desired to meet the pressing wants of British manufacturers. It is stated that the principal cause of the successful cultivation of cotton in Egypt is the great care bestowed upon irrigation. The result is seen in the qualities which mainly give value to Egyptian cotton as a raw material for spinning, which are the length, firmness and strength of the staple. Now as regards the irrigation of crops the Sherbro Hinterland is wonderfully well watered by streams and rivers. There is no scarcity of water anywhere, indeed one might almost say there is a superfluity of it ; and as regards the quality of the cotton we have already the most favourable report upon it from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, as I have quoted. On the one hand we have the Lancashire spinners requiring this production, on the other we have the native people anxious to cultivate it as a means of livelihood, if they could do it profitably. What is it that hinders the development of this most desirable industry ? There must be some reason for it which does not appear upon the surface, something more than a mere want of enterprise. The difficulty of land transport will not apply to the absolute non-production of cotton as an article of commerce, because it could at all events be brought down within the same area as palm kernels. All through the country excellent country cloths are made, and all through the country the cotton is grown in sufficient quantities to make them, as will be seen from the fact that these cloths pass in currency. Something should be done by the

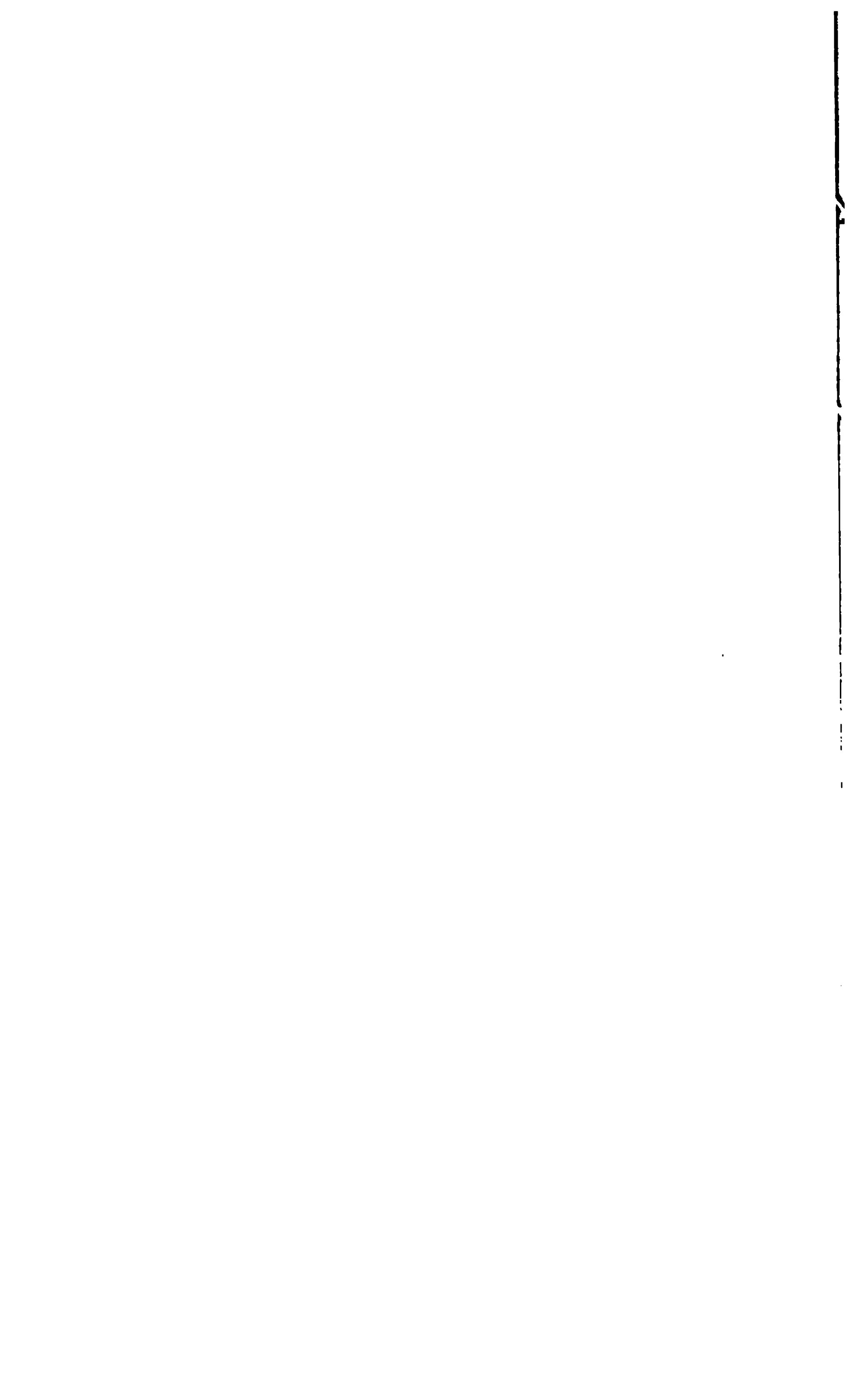




Fig. 30.—A PROFUSION OF WATER LILIES, THE BANK LINED WITH BAMBOO PALMS, SHERRBO. (Page 72.)



Fig. 31.—WEAVING COUNTRY CLOTH ON A NATIVE LOOM UPPER MENDI, *[To face page 99.]*

London, Liverpool and Manchester West African merchants in the way of stimulating their representatives to open up this cotton industry. We want in Sherbro a greater variety of articles for export than at present ; those which are already produced in the country to a certain extent only need encouragement by the merchants to be extensively cultivated.

I have had chiefs say to me:—"If the merchants will only tell us what things we can grow for their markets we will try to carry out their wishes ; but they do not tell us." I am persuaded that greater co-operation is needed between the chiefs and the merchants. Together they could do much for the welfare of the place, if they would endeavour to induce the people by their encouragement to cultivate for export new articles of produce.

#### NATIVE INDUSTRIES—THE MAKING OF COUNTRY CLOTHS

The principal industry amongst the Mendi people is the weaving of cotton into cloth. The texture of this cloth is very durable, and the colours being all vegetable dyes retain their brightness however often washed. This cloth is made upon a primitive native loom in long strips only a few inches in width ; the strips are sewn together and made up into cloths and gowns. The Gallinas in Lower Mendi undoubtedly take the first honours in the artistic treatment of colours. The up-country people appear to know only blue and white, or black and white, and have no designs beyond stripes. I am sure if these cloths were known in England they would be much appreciated and used, especially for portières and other hangings ; but

hitherto they have been treated only as curios. This is a native industry which if encouraged by the British public would give employment to thousands of people. A very primitive method of treating indigo produces the most beautiful light and shade that is a real pleasure to the artistic sense, and goes charmingly with blue china.

The weaving of the cloth is entirely the work of men, the women's part ceasing with the ginning and spinning. A woman sits down on a country stool and has in front of her a heap of fluffy cotton with the seed removed. In her right hand is a piece of cane that forms the spool, one end of which she inserts in a small cone of steatite. This piece of cane she revolves in a shell and keeps continually twirling, drawing out the flakey cotton until it is the consistency of thread and winds itself upon the spool. When this is finished the spool presents a bulky centre unsuitable for a shuttle; it therefore has to be re-wound to a uniform thickness, and men may be seen walking about the towns employed in doing this previous to weaving. They then set up the loom in some convenient spot, as shown in Figure 31, and proceed with the work, which takes a long time; but when once completed these cloths are of endless wear. They are accepted as currency, the price ranging from 2s. to as much as two heads of money, £6.

Small patches of the indigo shrub are to be seen growing outside all large towns. From indigo the colour is obtained used in the dyeing of different shades of blue country cloths. The indigo pot for the town is placed in the care of some of the elderly women, who safeguard it very carefully and keep it properly replenished.

## POTTERY

The making of pottery is another extensive and most important industry in the upper countries, where the people are mainly dependent upon native-made things for their domestic utensils of every-day use, including those for holding water for the family's daily consumption. Most excellent large pots and bowls are made, and it is really surprising to watch a woman—for this industry is entirely in the hands of women—begin upon a block of clay and work it up into a well-shaped article. There is no such thing as a wheel, kept in constant motion by steam power, no modern appliances to assist the worker and lessen her exertions ; everything is solid hard manual labour performed with the most primitive implements. All that she has is a slab of wood, upon which she throws water now and then. The clay she constantly revolves upon this wet slab, soon transforming it into a shapely bowl or some other useful thing. Her working tools appear to me to be merely her hands supplemented by a couple of palm cane modelling sticks and water ; she proceeds very rapidly and in a few minutes turns out a serviceable utensil. Here then is the foundation for finer and more artistic productions ; but the people have no ideas of variety of design—they want teaching. What a splendid field is presented even in this one industry for developing woman's work in this country !



## CHAPTER XII

### UP-COUNTRY JOTTINGS

WHEN on my tours I arrived at a town where I was to remain a night, a house was selected for me by the chief. It would always be one that was in the occupation of some family. They immediately moved out and disposed of themselves amongst their friends in other huts. The contents of the huts usually consisted of two or three lighted logs for the fire in the centre of the hut. Suspended from the rafters was a cane palm grid about four or five feet over the fire and upon this was put anything that needed to be smoke-dried. More frequently than not the ceiling of the house, which was made up of the mid-ribs of bamboo palm leaves put side by side, was not only blackened by the smoke but had long stalactites of congealed soot hanging down from it, giving the place a most filthy and disagreeable appearance. These "soot-icles" were sometimes eighteen inches long, and might be counted by the hundred. They were exceedingly unpleasant, because pieces of this sooty mass were continually dropping down upon your books, papers and bed, falling into your plates, and upon your head. The people rarely removed these things from some reason which I did







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Fig. 32. PALM LEAF HUTS—EXEMPTED FROM THE HOUSE TAX. TURNER'S PENINSULA.

not gather,—but it was quite evident that they liked them being there ; consequently, as I was only remaining for a night or two, and not wishing to disturb their domestic comfort more than was absolutely necessary, I put up with the inconvenience rather than interfere with their customs. It is curious that they should have allowed so much dirt to accumulate at the upper part of the house when they were so particular in cleaning up the ground which formed the floor.

Huts are round or parallelogram in shape, and mostly have mud walls, but in some places in Lower Sherbro—upon parts of Sherbro Island for instance—where it is sand, and mud is not obtainable, a peculiar kind of coarse cane mat is used, called Kru mats. Naturally there is plenty of ventilation through them, and huts with these mat walls are exceedingly cool. A ruder kind of hut is constructed simply of whole palm leaves, but they are usually only met with in the small farming fakais affiliated to the towns. Figure 32 shows a little palm nut fakai—the occupation of the men being palm nut working. Quantities of nuts will be noticed spread out upon the ground drying. This class of hut is exempted from paying any hut tax. Usually in the huts occupied by the better class people a great many fetishes are seen hanging about, sometimes of a most heterogeneous description. Where the people can afford it, they have charms prepared by the Mohammedan Mori men, in the shape of bits of board covered over with Arabic writings ; rams' and goats' horns filled with some fetish compound are favourite gree-grees, as are also bits of country iron and earthenware pots. At the entrances to the huts are seen old iron pots, filled with stones, or a large stone tied up to a stick, or a broken gun barrel, all of

which have some fetish meaning. Nothing is done without fetish of some sort. On one occasion I was lying in my hammock in the mud verandah of the hut in a very large town, when one of the sub-chiefs came in and complained of a pain in his ear. It so happened that there was a Mori magician there at the time, and he informed the sub-chief that he had a specific for curing the pain. He sent for his Mori board, for his country-made ink, his reed pen and a small piece of cotton, freshly picked from the shrub growing near by. He then wrote a few words in Arabic upon his board. He wrote them three times ;—called for some water, a little of which he dropped on the writing and rubbed it out with the cotton, which he then handed to the sub-chief,—telling him to put it in his ear. This he at once did, at the same time making a payment to the Mori man. The next morning, upon my inquiring of the sub-chief how he was, he stated that the pain had left and he was perfectly well,—quite convinced of the efficacy of the Mori man's medicine.

It can easily be seen how distasteful the introduction of civilisation must be to these itinerating magicians, as of course in time it would mean the breaking down of their means of livelihood.

With regard to these Mori men, whose name is legion, as soon as the African traveller gets away from European settlements and recognised Christian influence, he becomes aware of the existence of the Mohammedan Mori man everywhere. In Freetown, Mohammedanism is a highly respectable institution, having its mosques and schools ; and its adherents form no inconsiderable part of the native community. For instance, that exceptionally fine race, the Mandingos, are all followers of the Prophet. The

itinerating magician can, I presume, hardly be considered as a missionary by the Faithful. I have met him everywhere, but never seen him teaching anything to any of the Mendi people ; with them he is merely a fetish medicine man. He is, however, a great power, and the recognised soothsayer everywhere. Most of the large chiefs have one or two of these Mori men in their towns, whom they continually consult ; nothing of any importance being undertaken without their counsel. These Mori men certainly make more money than any one else in the country, as they do nothing without being handsomely paid for it. They are the sole purveyors of the written fetishes. Everybody wears some sort of fetish or gree-gree, and of course everybody has to pay for it.

Besides the Mori or book men, there are many native medicine men who provide country fetish, although of a ruder description, for the purpose of protecting growing crops against robbery ; but indeed fetish can be obtained to safeguard any one and anything upon payment, so far reaching and elastic are the powers of these fetish medicine men ; but great as these are, they in no way compare with the faith that the country people have in the infallibility of their preparations.

The national music of the men is the tom-tom or Sangboi. Mendis never tire of beating this drum—it is their one delight. I have known them up-country play through the entire night, and when gangs of men are sent out by the chief to work upon the roads they are invariably accompanied by the tom-tom beater who plays while they work, and so urges them on to greater exertion. Everything in these upper towns was done with the greatest decorum, and I witnessed nothing to which

the most fastidious could take any exception. I may however state that this was some time ago, when spirituous liquors were practically unknown.

In the Luawa country, now forming the frontier, it seems to be the custom at the great centres to build three large towns radiating round a central cleared space. This space is called the Korbangai and is used for public gatherings. On these Korbangais I have sometimes held political meetings, when there have been many hundreds of people,—chiefs and their followers, present. The Korbangai, surrounded with a dense vegetation out of which the sites of the towns have been cut, is always extremely picturesque. It is in these places that the great meetings of the chiefs from all parts of the country are convened. Ordinarily groups of dusky natives may be seen sitting and standing about enjoying the shelter of the tall trees that have been purposely left standing among the stone-edged graves of those who have passed away.

When meetings are expected to last for several days it is usual to erect long open sheds with thatched roofs in which are slung the hammocks of the more important chiefs. During the debates, which often last for several days, these chiefs recline in their hammocks, each one surrounded by some of his wives, his attendants forming groups outside under the trees.

In opening the meeting it is rarely that a chief speaks himself, but he deposes his prime minister, who is sure to be thoroughly well posted up in the affairs of his country. These upper country people are born orators, and a chief never puts forward a man who is not both a good and fluent speaker. An absolute and impressive silence reigns. One

at a time an orator steps into the centre of the Korbangai and begins by bowing to the people and saying in Mendi, *Bisir-heh, Bisir Ka-heh, Bisir-ka-ka-heh*”; which means, “Thank you—thank you much—thank you very much.” For your presence, whether you are friends or foes,” is understood. Then walking to and fro with measured pace he opens out the subject with the caution of a practised barrister. During his speech he will frequently appeal to his people as to the truth of any particular assertion, by raising his tone and saying “*Kerri?*” “Is it not so?” when they will instantly reply as with one voice, and call out their assent. Should a question arise and the orator demand of the other side whether such and such a thing is so or not, no reply is given until the chief addressed and his head people have retired from the Korbangai to consult together. When they have arrived at a decision they return—and very quietly the answer is given with deliberate caution and great dignity.

The whole debate in fact is carried on with the greatest quietness, ceremony and politeness, and often filled me with profound amazement and afforded me infinite pleasure. At these times it was difficult for me to realise that I was in a so-called uncivilised country—for certainly the manners of these parliamentary hands in their abstaining from personal invective and recriminations, were polished to a very remarkable degree. It struck me forcibly that many a lesson might be gathered from the dignity, the courtesy and the general friendliness which these tribes showed,—not only towards a stranger but in their every-day life towards each other.

The amazement shown by the people upon first seeing a white man was very great. All paramount chiefs on my

arrival at their towns were most anxious that I should remain there a few days, in order that they might send round to their different villages, and the people have an opportunity of coming in and looking at me. Frequently there were from seventy to eighty people standing in front of my hut for hours together gazing upon me, and so darkening the narrow opening to the hut as to prevent my getting on with the writing of my official reports and despatches. I therefore was compelled to have recourse to innocent strategy. I had fortunately brought with me a Japanese paper snake, and by producing this from beneath my coat and shaking it in front of the people, it assumed such natural positions as to entirely delude them and they cleared away with lightning rapidity. This had to be repeated as a fresh crowd collected, and up to this day I believe that they think that the snake was a real one.

It is a wonder that more people do not lose their lives by snake bite, travelling about, as they do, with bare feet and getting into all sorts of places and through every description of vegetation where it is impossible to see the concealed snakes. Probably more people than we are aware lose their lives in this way, and their disappearance may often be attributed to some fetish influence. I have often been in my hammock when, without the slightest warning, the boys have uttered fearful yells and darted forward with a tremendous rush, which has been caused by their suddenly coming upon a large snake. Had they not been exceedingly well trained the probability is that they would have dropped the hammock on the ground and fled. But in all my travels of thousands of miles such a thing has never occurred to me, although I have known it to occur to others where the occupant of the hammock and

the snake have become mixed up together, owing to the boys in their fright dropping the whole concern. In one particular case the occupant, being shut in by the canopied top, was naturally in great danger, but fortunately the snake was as much alarmed as the traveller and made off without doing any harm.

#### LANDING A PYTHON

Speaking of snakes, many years ago in Lower Sherbro, as I was sitting in the verandah of my house, which was on the bank of the river, I noticed a dark arch standing about three feet out of the water and floating down with the tide. The form of this object, which from its upright position, I knew could not be a snag, raised my curiosity, and I at once jumped into a dingy and with my men made for it. Upon nearing it, it proved to be the centre part of the body of a very large python. It was dead, but perfectly fresh. A rope was made fast to it and we endeavoured to tow it ashore. But we made no headway; and I found that this difficulty was caused by a crocodile who was pulling at the other end of the snake against the stream. Ultimately the crocodile let go and we succeeded in landing the snake. The boys stretched him out full length and I carefully measured him. His length was thirty-three feet, and his diameter about six inches in the thickest part. This huge reptile had evidently died from indigestion; his last meal had been too much for him. In about his centre was a large protuberance which I had opened; it was caused by the presence of a big and perfectly fresh native dog. In those days I did not know the value of the skin of



the python, but I have since been informed that it was worth £50.

The carcase was left on the beach, and the crocodile came back and took it away.

I am aware that the size of this python was extraordinary, and I have never again seen one approaching it; although I have seen some half the size. I have frequently mentioned this incident, and it has generally been received with the greatest scepticism even by men on the Coast. I can only repeat that I measured the thing myself and that my measurement was correct. Were it not so, I should not have mentioned it in these pages, which are a record of fact and not of fiction.

I have already referred to the useful results produced upon the natives by the introduction of my Japanese plaited-paper snake at the proper moment. It was a harmless and expeditious way of clearing off crowds of on-lookers gathered at inconvenient times about the openings to my hut. I think I should also state that it produced an equally startling effect upon one who was not an African. It occurred in this wise. At a big meeting I happened to show my snake to one of the officials upon the Governor's staff, when he bethought him that here would be an excellent opportunity to play off a practical though harmless joke upon another European officer. He accordingly promptly borrowed the snake, and threw it upon the mud floor of his friend's hut, with the head slightly raised. It was thought that this officer would be going at once to his hut. Doubtless had he done so, the deception would have been discovered; but, as it happened, he did not return until the sun had set, and the light was dull and fast fading, when the snake appeared more real;

so real indeed that it became necessary for a double barrel gun to be brought at once. The Governor, the practical joker, and myself had been for a short walk, and as we re-entered the town, the first thing we heard was the report of a gun, immediately followed by another. I conjectured that it was fired at the snake, and said, "There goes my snake, some one has shot it." This proved to be true, for upon the people going inside the hut after the supposed snake, the paper one was brought out in two or three pieces. Naturally the ructions that ensued between the two men were not inconsiderable ; however, during the evening, I was enabled to fix matters up comfortably, and the unfortunate episode was laid to rest—so was my snake.

Some of the chiefs objected to their wives smoking. I found them using their country-grown tobacco called Tongoni, but chiefly in the form of snuff. They did not object to their women snuffing if the snuff was not taken into the nostril, but into the mouth. Desiring to ascertain what ultimately became of the snuff, when three young women applied to me for some, I only consented to give them a little conditionally upon their standing before me while I was writing, and protruding their tongues when called upon to do so. In the course of about twenty minutes they had done so about six times, when I found that nothing remained of the snuff, which had apparently dissolved and been swallowed. Finding that snuff was very much in use, I took out with me from England a quantity, which I opened out upon reaching Upper Mendi. At first the chiefs seemed to appreciate it, but I noticed after a little while they ceased to ask for it ; and upon my inquiring the reason, the interpreter informed me that "although they like em bad, he no bin burn em too plenty."

I bethought me what I could do to make it stronger, when I remembered that I had amongst my stores a half-pound tin of ground pepper. When alone I mixed this, and upon their retasting it, the interpreter stated that "It done fit em good fashion now," and they ultimately finished up every bit of it. My snuff-box, called in Mendi, *Tavukeh Loi*, was always upon my table at the disposal of the chiefs while the snuff lasted. There was also some leaf tobacco for those who preferred it; and I think these little kindnesses, which were much appreciated, went a very long way towards creating a good understanding between myself, the chiefs, and the people.

After giving a few leaves of tobacco to some of the wives, I was rather surprised to find three of them return one afternoon carrying a small bundle wrapt up in leaves. The interpreter informed me that they desired to speak to me; they were therefore invited to enter the hut and sit upon a mat, which was spread upon the ground. I went on with my writing, and I was under the impression that they were about to present me with some small country curio in return for the tobacco which I had given them in the morning. They talked among themselves in subdued tones with an earnest expression on their faces, and I began to wonder what the parcel could contain which appeared to cause them so much anxiety. Presently one thrust the bundle unopened before me. I received it, and upon unfastening the fibrous string with which it was carefully tied up, I found it contained about half a pint of dried flying ants. For the moment I was rather taken aback, for although I had lived many years in West Africa, I have not acquired a taste for the native delicacies; still, I fully appreciated the kind intention. The





Fig. 33.—BEATING THE TOM TOM OR SANG-BOL, BY MENDI BOYS (Page 105.)



*See face page 113.*

Fig. 34.—SHOWING SOME OF THE NUMEROUS STYLES IN WHICH THE UPPER MENDI WOMEN DRESS THEIR HAIR.

ants, however, were not wasted, for my people enjoyed them very much.

Sometimes in the evening the head wife, attended by six or eight of the other wives, would come into my hut to hold a little entertainment of their own. The head wife would proceed to give a small address upon my personal appearance ; passing her hand through my hair she would exclaim how soft it was. She would then stroke my hands and arms, putting them in various positions, also my feet and legs, the audience seeming very much interested in her proceedings ; in whatever position she placed my limbs I allowed them to so remain until she replaced them. They seemed quite satisfied that my skin was white, and that my colour was not made up of their own country wojeh or whitewash.

The first occupation of a native woman in the early morning is to adorn her forehead with numerous strange devices of white or coloured clay and animal fat, that must be put on fresh every day. The marks are made by a single finger, dipped in the mixture contained in a small shell. Great importance is attached to this, but the longest operation is the hair-dressing, which may take some days. A woman may be seen lying on the ground with her head in the lap of the operator, who after combing out the wool with a strong, native wooden comb, with long prongs,—joins on other pieces of wool that are most elaborately plaited, and continually added to until the required height is obtained. There are numerous designs in this hair-dressing, and, as will be seen in Figure 34, taken at Juru in the Gaura country, it is quite a science, the most common and favourite pattern rather suggesting that curious cell-like concretion known to geologists as the brain stone, the top

being embellished by a little silver or leather gree-gree. The inside is stuffed with some soft material, and as this coiffure is to remain up for a considerable time, a silver or cane skewer readily available, is frequently seen stuck through this mound, the reason for which can easily be imagined.

A great deal has been said, and is being said, about the polygamy that prevails, but I cannot myself suggest an immediate remedy, because it certainly would be extremely hard if a chief gave up all his wives except one and turned them adrift to shift for themselves with their numerous offspring. It must be remembered that many of these women do not reside with the chief, but are set over villages which are affiliated to the chief's town, and they are important people, and render much assistance to the chief. There is no sort of jealousy existing amongst the numerous wives ; every one knows her position. The chief himself takes no part in the domestic arrangements of his house. He is waited upon hand and foot ; his meals are carefully prepared and brought to him wherever he may be ; and, when holding a palaver, I have frequently noticed that he is surrounded by ten or twelve of the youngest wives, each of whom with immense pride carries something belonging to him, such as his sword, snuff-box, or some other article, and I am bound to admit that I have looked on with admiration at the attention shown by these young women towards the chiefs. These women, though wearing a scarcity of clothing, have their ebony bodies brilliantly polished. They wear heavy silver chains and plaques, hanging loosely upon them, with five or six leopard's teeth strung upon a tightly-fitting necklace, and massive silver armlets sometimes extending from the wrist

to the elbow. This may be considered barbaric, but at the same time it is highly picturesque, and forms a pleasing contrast to the surroundings.

An ordinary town on the main road is really a clearing among the big vegetation which forms its natural walls. The huts were originally clustered together in so irregular a fashion that they formed a maze, not to be penetrated by a stranger without a guide; and so closely packed that the thatched eaves of one hut overlapped those of its neighbours. The reason for this style of building is to be found in its security against slave raids and war parties; as the people of the town could easily escape into the dense bush immediately surrounding them as soon as an alarm was given, before their enemies could have time to track them through these labyrinthine burrows.

This rabbit-hole arrangement had, however, its weak point, for in case of fire everything before the wind had to go; and it is extraordinary with what rapidity in the dry season a hut can be consumed. I have seen a burning ember no larger than a sixpence float through the air, until it rested upon a thatched roof, and in less than five minutes the hut was burnt down. Since the country has come under British influence, and neither slave raids nor war parties are to be feared, new towns have been built on a more open plan, with the huts further apart. The towns consequently not only look very much better, but can be kept much cleaner. The main road can be carried right through them, which used not to be the case. Some of these new towns are beautifully clean, admirably kept, and very picturesque in appearance. The huts vary greatly in size, and are of the description common to most parts of Africa, with wattled mud walls and roof of palm thatch.



In the lower countries near the Coast, when beds are met with at all, they are of palm canes. In the upper countries the bed is a fixture, and is merely a solid block of dried mud, about a foot in height and six feet in length. As I have had a large experience of both, I may say that I infinitely prefer the mud bed, which can always be brushed down easily, and is consequently far cleaner than the cane-palm bed; besides which there is no place for snakes and other vermin to harbour.

I have more than once had a hut allotted to me which contained as many as twelve mud beds, and so large in diameter that, with my small light, I could not see to its other side. I was only able to occupy about a fourth of it, the other portions apparently being in possession of promiscuous goats, dogs and sheep, which found their way in through the apertures intended for doorways, but which, in place of doors, had merely a hanging mat that, of course, was easily pushed aside by these animals. In first going up the country I endeavoured to sleep without a light, but I found that the animals used to come and rub themselves up against my face, which not only startled one in the darkness, but was not at all conducive to obtaining a good night's rest. After this I invariably burnt a very small lamp, only just sufficient to give out a flicker of light. But, perhaps, one of the most trying experiences of the explorer is the attempt to get a good night's rest when a screaming cricket is perched in the rafters, four feet over your head, and a bull-frog in full croak has taken up his abode underneath the bed. I may say that a cricket is a most annoying thing; the noise from a single insect is simply deafening, seeming to penetrate one's brain, and at night it is no easy matter to locate where the screeching comes from. It is,

therefore, a very difficult thing to get rid of it, as, upon your making the slightest movement, the cricket has a cunning habit of immediately ceasing his noise, and probably looks on with delight at your ineffectual attempts to discover his position ; and, no sooner do you give up in despair, and throw yourself again upon the hard mud or cane bed, than he resumes his scream with renewed vigour and evident pleasure.

It is also surprising how bull-frogs can conceal themselves in a hut. I have, before retiring to a cane bed, hunted all about for any objectionable vermin that might be prospecting around ; and although I have endeavoured to do this most thoroughly, sometimes, directly I had flung myself on the bed, the croaking of the bull-frog in all its hideousness would suddenly break out right under my head. Those who have heard the continuous roaring of bull-frogs, even at some distance, will know how very monotonous and objectionable it is ; but when it is only about eighteen inches from your head and in full blast the noise becomes absolutely unbearable. Fortunately you *can* locate a bull-frog.

In a town during the daytime one is struck by the absence of cattle. Left to wander about at their own sweet will, and to the danger of the people, they leave at daylight on foraging expeditions, and return at dusk. Most of them are very wild, and, when one is required for killing, it is singled out and chased by a number of men, who slash at it with swords until it ultimately falls, and is despatched. This is sometimes a lengthy operation. In the town at night these cattle, too, have a playful habit of putting their heads through the mat, and of walking into the huts. A hut very frequently contains, besides the inmates, a small poultry farm, and when I have taken possession of a house

I have very often found a hen sitting upon a nest of eggs upon the ground, either at the head or foot of the mud bed. Although everything else was cleared out for my accommodation, the sitting hen was never removed.

When I have had occasion to remain at a town for some days, it is invariably the custom for the chief to pay a morning visit, accompanied by several of his wives and people. Once, when in the town of one of the biggest chiefs in the country, who had a great number of wives, just before the visit of the chief, the head wife came in and asked me to intercede on behalf of another wife who had been in hiding in the bush for the last fortnight, owing to her indiscretion with a relative. The head wife begged so hard that at last I promised to speak to the chief and to obtain his forgiveness for both. She produced at the same time a couple of country cloths with which to "*konani*," the customary fashion of "showing a palaver." The chief arrived shortly after, and I concluded the interview by presenting these cloths to him, and saying that in my private capacity I had been requested to bring a painful subject before him, and to ask him to grant the request that I was about to make. He stated his surprise that I should have to ask any favour from him, accepted the cloths, and desired to know what the favour was. I then mentioned the subject, upon which he became at once exceeding wroth, saying that he might have killed them both, but that as he could refuse me nothing, he would extend his forgiveness. Upon hearing this the woman, who must have been secretly in hiding outside the hut, at once rushed in and prostrated herself before the chief, at the same moment "*konanying*" in a similar manner with another country cloth. For an instant the chief was

taken aback, but immediately regaining his presence of mind, he placed his right hand upon her shoulder to signify forgiveness, and she arose from the ground amidst the clapping of hands and shouts of the people. No sooner had she passed out of the hut than the offending man entered in the same way, and, following the woman's example, prostrated himself, put down his present on the chief's knees, bowing his head, but uttering not a word. There was a momentary pause ; then the chief's face relaxed into a smile, his hand came down upon the right shoulder of the man, who got up pardoned.

That chief was a magnificent man, about six feet two in height, and of unusual intelligence, a great warrior, beloved by his people, and the first with whom I made a treaty on behalf of the Government for the Gaura country. Unfortunately he only lived for less than a year afterward, and his death was a great loss to every one, as he was a most powerful and loyal man. His death created a certain amount of friction, and broke his people up into dissatisfied factions.

In visiting this chief's town shortly after his death I found the people in a state of mourning ; a good deal of that monotonous and continuous doleful wailing peculiar to semi-savage tribes was being freely indulged in. The people more closely connected with the late chief presented an unkempt and slovenly appearance, their bodies draped in the oldest and dirtiest of their cloths. The women and girls had adorned their heads with small circlets made from finely twisted grass cord, coloured either black, yellow, brown, or a combination of these colours, or simply with narrow strips of country cotton fabric, while in some instances a furrow about an inch in width had

been cleanly shaven through the dense wool around their heads, an even more conspicuous form of mourning than either of the others. Whichever way one turned there was every visible sign manifested by the people that their late chief was held in very high esteem by them, and I believe that one and all felt that they had sustained a heavy misfortune in the death of their favourite chief, as he undoubtedly was.

It may be asked what on the death of a big chief becomes of his very numerous wives. On this occasion I found the large barri hung with fine country cloths. Within it all the widows were located, and a good many cloths and a magnificent leopard's-skin hammock were on view. I ascertained that these wives would have to remain there for six months ; at the expiration of which time they would be at perfect liberty to form new alliances and go where they pleased. Some of the wives I found afterwards had allied themselves with other chiefs in other countries ; although many of the elder ones still remained in the place.

The politeness with which I was treated by the Upper Mendi chiefs, who for the first time looked on a white man, and the ceremony extended towards me, a stranger in their midst, was remarkable, and very greatly impressed me. At this chief's town of Juro there was a female dwarf, whose photo is shown in Figure 35. A certain amount of fetish was attached to this woman, and she accompanied the chief when he went about the country, was treated with every mark of respect and was looked upon as something more than an ordinary mortal. In the background will be noticed a large stone tied up with cane-rope and hanging to a stick in front of the hut.

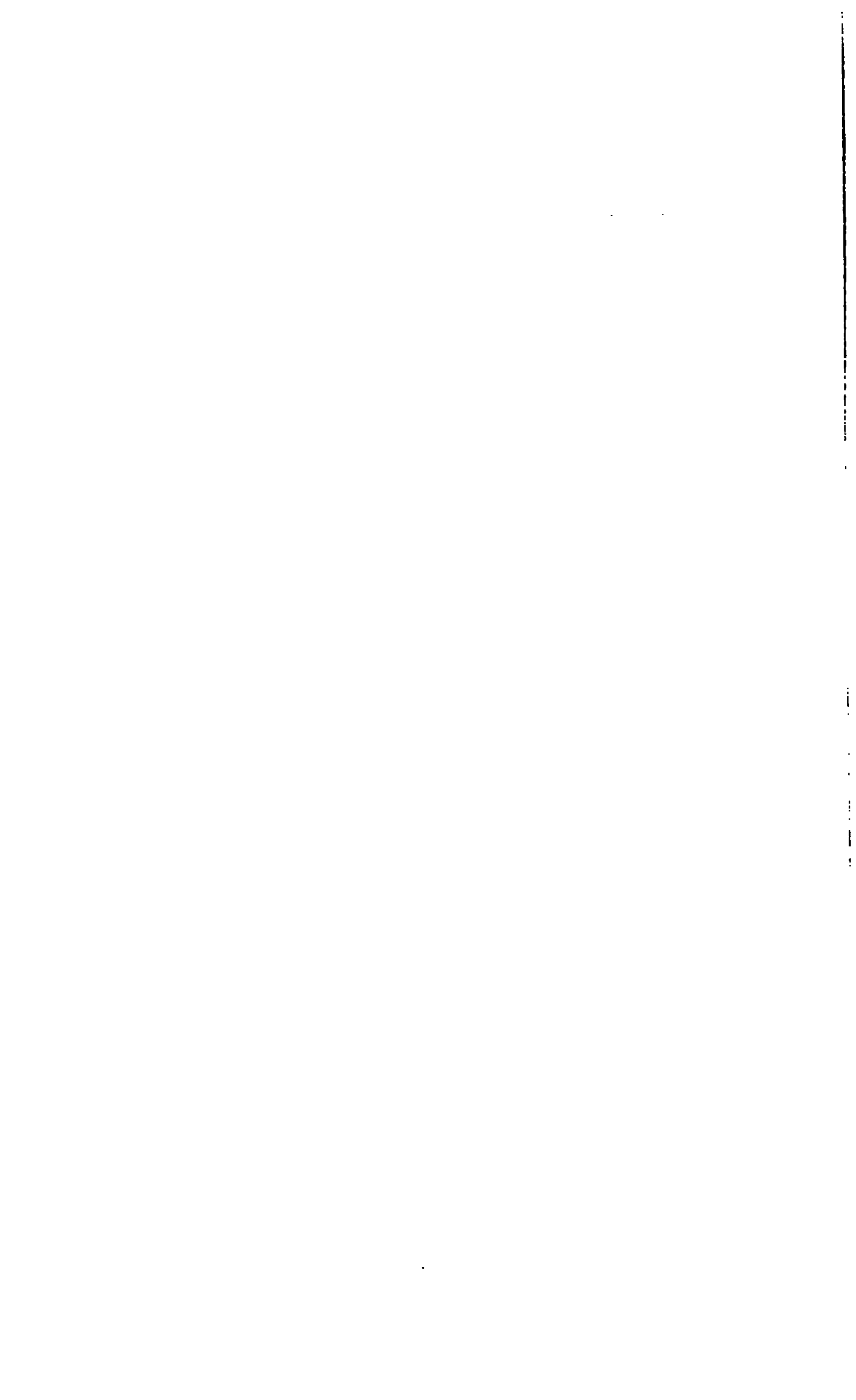




FIG. 35 —A FETISH FEMALE DWARF.  
UPPER MENDI



*Uto face page 122*  
FIG. 36.—A FETISH MALE DWARF.  
UPPER MENDI.

All of which is of a fetish signification. The male dwarf (Figure 36) belonged to another big chief, a considerable distance away. This dwarf was also regarded in the same light as the other. Although small he is a strong, healthy and well proportioned man. He is wearing a gree-gree round his neck and upon his right arm. When I asked him if he were married, he stated with considerable pride that he had two wives—one of whom he brought to see me. She was a fine young woman, more than a head taller than himself, and apparently very proud of her husband, notwithstanding his diminutive stature.

I found that the old patriarchal style prevailed. A paramount chief hearing of my approach to his town, came out with a large retinue of his people to welcome and greet me, and proceeded to embrace me upon the high road before all the people. I returned the greeting in a similar way. This welcome struck me as being full of sentiment and kindly feeling. I was then escorted by him to the town, my hammock-bearers being replaced by his own men, several of whom also assisted my carriers with their loads, which was much appreciated by them. After locating me in a town, it was the invariable custom for the chief to bring forward and present some food, the quantity offered being in proportion to the status of the chief and the size of the town. It might be that only a single fowl or a small quantity of rice was presented, at other times it might be a sheep or a goat, and I have known a chief present two bullocks and place so much rice upon the ground that I have had to beg him to desist. It was my custom when receiving a bullock, always to return half to the chief, together with the head and the hide, as the hide was prepared and used as a mat. I returned also the



horns from any goats or rams, because these could be utilised as snuff boxes and gree-gree charms.

In some of the large towns I was regularly serenaded about six o'clock in the evening by three or four of the younger wives of the chief in front of my hut. One of them would sing a solo to the sound of the sehguras, which were shaken by the others. It was not so much the music that I appreciated as the kindly effort made to show respect to a representative of the British Government, a lone white man with not another for hundreds of miles around, that so much impressed me.

The national music of the women is the sehgura, which is a small hollow gourd, having over it a loosely fitting mesh of country cotton strung with hard split seeds, the long loose ends of the cotton being gathered up over the bulbous end of the gourd and held in the left hand, the right hand holding the narrow neck. Upon the gourd being shaken and the thread alternately slackened and tightened, the sound given out by the seeds striking upon the dry wooden casing is very considerable, but it can be modulated at the will of the performer, and is by no means inharmonious. At all native festivities, where women are present, the sehgura is to be heard, and when three or four are being shaken together, the noise though loud is not harsh ; it is very effective, and is greatly appreciated by the natives.

#### WOMAN PALAVER.

One of the greatest curses, if not the greatest, throughout the lower country, is a system of extortion, known by the name of "woman palaver." Women in this part of West Africa, as doubtless in other parts of it, are answerable



*Uo fac page 122.*

**FIG. 37.—PLAYING THE SENHURA—THE NATIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF THE MENDE WOMEN.**



for a very great deal of the oppression and misery which is the lot of the men ; and it is not too much to say that a considerable income was derived by some of the minor chiefs and head men who encouraged certain of their women to trump up serious charges against innocent persons. It was enough for an accusation to be alleged by a woman, especially a chief's wife, against a man, to cause him to be brought before the chief, charged with "woman palaver" ; there was no hope for him, he would be mulcted in heavy fines, and in former days before the Protectorate was created, if unable to pay well, he would have been sold into slavery. There is no occasion to particularise the full meaning of this "woman palaver"—the name in itself offers sufficient explanation. So great was the fear that men entertained of being designedly entrapped for the purpose of extracting money from them, that I have known them upon coming to a town of doubtful repute in the afternoon, ask permission to leave it that they might sleep in the bush—anywhere so long as they were not in the town. Fortunately this nefarious system of blackmailing has now been modified by the abolition of slavery ; but it still exists to no inconsiderable extent, and it is one of the bad old landmarks, and will take a long time to thoroughly break down, though happily I must admit I have not heard of it in the Upper Mendi.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SECRET SOCIETIES

#### I.—THE PORO

BEFORE the establishment of British law in the Protectorate, secret societies entirely ruled the natives.

These societies are still of great importance, and are an enormous force both for good and evil.

The very best of the natives, even those who have been educated in the Mission schools, believe in the unseen working of the fetish "medicine." I do not think that there is any native who is not, in some form or other, in bondage to this enslaving superstition.

"Medicine" is a word of terror all over the country. Nothing can be done merely by words; words must be accompanied by some mysterious rite, in which secretly prepared leaves and herbs play the most prominent part.

Distance is no bar to the potency of a medicine charm; people twenty miles away are supposed to be as much affected by these medicine incantations as though they were present and had taken the fetish preparations.

Absolute secrecy is maintained by the societies, not because the members have taken an oath and feel themselves morally bound, but because they believe that any

disclosure of the societies' methods would at once cause the medicine to work fatally upon themselves. In all the years that I have been in the country I have never yet succeeded in penetrating the inner mysteries, and indeed I always tell the people that I have no wish that they should divulge to me anything that they have sworn to keep secret.

I am satisfied that there is no one outside the societies who really knows what the secrets are.

The most important societies, well known throughout the whole country, are, the Poro, the Bundu, and the Yassi.

The Poro is a system of Freemasonry amongst the men. The training for the privilege of joining this society may begin for the boys at any age from seven to twenty, but it only lasts a few months.

A boy has no real name until he goes to the Poro bush, when it is given him at his circumcision, as among the Jews. He also receives the Poro markings on both sides of the spine. He is then taught the medicinal use of leaves and herbs, not merely as fetish but as medicine in our sense of the word. Many retain great faith in native medicines and prefer them to European drugs. I know boatmen and others employed in the Government service, who, instead of being placed upon the sick list, prefer to provide a substitute while they get leave to obtain country doctoring. Sometimes of course this is going to certain death ; but the liberty of the subject has to be respected.

Dancing is an important part of their education. The dancing dress of the Poro boy is very peculiar. A hoop encircles the waist, from which depends a cascade of fibre reaching to the ankles ; a webbing of country cotton

is over the body ; a curious head-dress, not unlike the front of a mitre and of fantastic device, is usually worn, and Sebehs, or fetish charms, hang from the neck. Dancing is accompanied by the beating of the Sangboi, or tom-tom, dancing and singing to this instrument being the principal amusement of the Mendis after dark. When the boys have completed their training and gone through the ceremonies in the juvenile Poro, they are eligible to join the general or social Poro, in which is formulated the unwritten law of the country.

The meetings of the fraternity for initiation of new members always takes place in the dry season, from November to April, as they are held in the Big Bush, a part of which is sufficiently cleared and the ground cleaned. The opening to the Big Bush is rudely constructed of palm leaves, the entrance being through leafy bowers, and the aperture serving for a doorway, hung with country mats. Inside, the place is separated into compartments similarly divided by palm leaves—that entrance also being hung with mats. The whole is beneath the dense and overspreading foliage of high trees, and is known as the Poro bush, or Kamehra. Upon the candidate applying to the first entrance for admission to the fraternity he is met by a Wuja, or messenger, who is on the opposite side of the mat within the enclosure. The Wuja asks, “Who is there?”—quickly putting such impossible questions as : “Could you bring water in a basket? Could you root up a full grown palm tree with your hands?” The novice having previously been instructed, replies yes to each question. The Wuja then thrusts his hand forward by the side of the mat, takes the new comer by his right hand and pretends to draw him inside.



Fig. 38. - FORD BOYS IN DANCING COSTUME, JUKU, GAURA COUNTRY,  
UPPER MENDI.



*To face page 126.*

Fig. 39. - SERENADING—A SOLOIST.  
UPPER MENDI. (Page 122.)





This is repeated three times, and at each attempt the novice puts out his right foot, and at the fourth time he is successfully drawn inside. While this is taking place the Poro boys inside in attendance upon the Wuja are creating a pandemonium by the beating of tom-toms, and the blowing of horns. When he has entered the noise ceases, and the Wuja calls out that the initiate has come in ; all shout with gladness, and give the new brother a hearty welcome. This being done payment begins, and the initiate hands over to the Wuja about eight leaves of tobacco. He is then taken to the entrance mat of the next division. The Wuja goes behind that mat and repeats the same process. The initiate gives about twelve or sixteen leaves of tobacco, and is drawn inside. The Wuja has now finished his part of the business and hands the boy over to one of the head law-givers in the Poro bush—who, after imparting certain information, will ask the boy to which of the departments he desires to belong ; each division being sub-divided, and having one or two side compartments of palm leaves attached to it.

The different degrees are :—

1. Yuyira,        } for messengers, Poro boys, servants and  
Wujanga,        } the poorer classes.
2. Missi,         } Mohammedan Mori men and Devil men.  
Binima,         }
3. Kaimahun, for chiefs only.

Upon the initiate being allotted to one of the first two degrees he is sent to the head man of that department, who will charge an entrance fee of from 3*d.* to 2*s.*, and he is then given the general law, but is not told anything connected with the secret things of the chiefs belonging

to the third degree. In that degree, when any chief desires to call a meeting of chiefs, he sends round his Poro messengers. The chiefs so called then assemble together in his Poro bush alone and talk their secrets, all being previously sworn upon country fetish medicine, probably the Tehlang, the Torma, or the Boru-Boreh. The first is a medicine which deprives one of his nose, as it is a snuff taken into the nostrils; the second is supposed to kill not only the person, but also any members of his family who may upon his death cry for him; and the third, Boru-Boreh, kills the person only, but has no effect upon his relatives. The Kaimahun is absolute, and rests entirely with the chiefs; a rising or anything else might be arranged in this degree and nothing whatever be known to those outside, whether members of the fraternity or not, until such times as the chiefs might direct.

No one is allowed inside the highest degree in the Poro bush except by the invitation of the chiefs. A person brought up before a Poro tribunal might be tried, killed and buried inside the Poro bush without the slightest chance of the circumstance being divulged outside. Before receiving the law the initiate is sworn upon country fetish medicine. He has then become a member of the society, and after several new members have been initiated into the mysteries of the brotherhood a time is fixed "to pull the devil," who will introduce these new members to the outside world. The night previous to this ceremony all the brethren, old and new, are expected to sleep inside the Poro bush, and quietness must reign until two or three o'clock in the morning, when one of the members will climb up a tree and shout out three

times, which arouses the whole community from its slumbers. After the third shout the place resounds with the yelling of the inmates, the blowing of horns and the beating of tom-toms, which continue for two or three minutes. This is repeated three times. The same afternoon the man who acts as devil comes outside, attended by the entire brotherhood in two files, the Wujangas keeping order. The procession is headed by seven or eight boys, who turn somersaults and direct its course. After visiting the different huts where there is a likelihood of receiving any present, all return to the Poro bush, when a sudden death-like stillness takes possession of the place. This is owing to the devil feigning to be overcome by the great exertion which he has undergone. He is supposed to have fainted. The Wujangas at once run out to the water-side and bring in some sand, taking it to where the devil is lying. They go out again and collect firewood, returning with it to the devil. A third time they go out and obtain water, bringing that back also to the devil, who is at this time in the Binima compound of his degree. Presently shouting is heard from the compound, denoting that under these attentions the devil has revived. The shouting is taken up by the various degrees, first by the Missi, then by the Wujangas, followed by the Yuyira, and lastly by the outside public. The devil having recovered, a keen feeling arises that it is time to divide the presents that have been received on the walk round, which is done, all sharing alike; but apart from these presents, the Society has to collect a head of money to pay to the devil for his part in the show, which always takes place in the dry season.

The Poro bush usually remains open for three or four

months, and the ceremony during that period is repeated as often as sufficient members are elected. The Poro devil, when approaching a town, does not wear a distinctive costume; he is merely accompanied by a large concourse of Poro men and boys, who run about and make a great noise. Upon this alarm reaching the town all men who are not of the Poro order, together with all women and children, must conceal themselves inside their huts, and drop down the mats before the door and window spaces. The women are to kneel down indoors, and clap their hands. The devil then enters the town, when all noise must cease. Upon these occasions his presence is usually for the purpose of fetching an initiate. The devil speaks in a discordant way through a piece of hollow stick, having holes cut in it like a flute, which holes are covered over with spiders' webs. He compliments the chief, and inquires what news there is in the town, and, after a few minutes, he goes away. The only occasion upon which the devil makes a prolonged stay in a town is on the evening before the boys are brought out from the Poro bush affiliated to it, when he remains from about seven o'clock in the evening until two or three o'clock in the morning. At intervals during this time he perambulates the town, blowing this reed flute in a very doleful way—the meaning of it being that he is presumed to be in the pains before child-birth, for, when the boys go first into the Poro bush, the devil is supposed to be pregnant, and, as the boys remain there the whole of the rains, when they come out of it the devil is said to have given birth. Upon leaving the Poro bush the boys wear four or five coils of rope, made of twisted fern, round their waists, which is their emblem while Poro boys. As they have now formally entered the brotherhood, this rope of fern is taken off.

Various privileges are permitted to the boys for that day only. They may catch and kill cattle, goats, sheep, fowls, root up cassada, and perform other little pleasantries ; and they are not slow in availing themselves of the opportunity, although as much of the live stock as possible is discreetly concealed before the eventful day. During the previous day to their leaving the bush they prepare within it great lengths of this twisted fern rope, and at night they pass it from a tree in the Poro bush to trees outside, carrying it to the uppermost branches. When the people in the towns and villages awake in the morning, they are shown this rope, and are told that it was by its means that the devil took his departure from the Poro bush to the sky—known in Mendi as *Gehworlahun* (God's-land).

The approach to a Poro bush is readily distinguishable by the Poro emblem, which is conspicuously put about the public bush paths. This emblem is called the *Kane*.

Next in power to the chiefs in the great Poro institution come the heads of the Poro, called the Tassos. Each big chief of a town has his own Tasso man, who, upon very important occasions, attends with his chief.

When I photographed the four Tassos (Figure 41), it was at the conclusion of a very great and unusual meeting, the installation of a chief, after several years of interregnum. As will be seen (Figure 40), there were four of these Tassos present. The four Tassos formed part of the chief's body-guard, and took a prominent part in the ceremony. It is necessary to observe carefully the costumes worn by these men, more particularly their enormous head-gear, which is about three feet in height. It is a great weight, and is consequently removed whenever the men are not actively

engaged. These head-pieces are erected on a foundation of plaited cane. The human skulls and the thigh-bones immediately above the part fitting the head are those of defunct Tassos, which can only be renewed from other departed members of the order. The whole is surmounted by a gigantic bouquet of feathers, gathered from all kinds of birds, these bouquets being quite three feet in diameter.

The dress of these men is of the usual barbaric description, made up of a network over the body, from which hang various skins of animals, bunches of fibre from the waist forming a short skirt ; while attached to the knees are several pieces of hollowed native iron, from which depend rings of similar metal, that jingle as the men move about, making a considerable noise.

The Tassos do not dance, that part of the ceremony being undertaken by the "Laka" and his followers, who are subordinate to the Tassos. It is only necessary for one Laka to be present in attendance upon several Tassos. The Laka in this instance will be noticed standing to the right, shield in hand, having his black body bedaubed with large white spots. Grouped at the back of him are his boys, to the number of about fifty, who are ready to rush madly round the town, headed by the Laka, to notify the people what is about to take place, call them together, or warn them to get into their houses.

If a Tasso dies in a town, he must not be interred there, but in the bush, as the law is that no woman must look upon a dead Tasso. When one dies in a town, a Poro, or law, is immediately placed upon that town compelling the women to withdraw from it until the burying is over. Poro law is so imperative that the inhabitants of a town can be sent into the bush in a few minutes ; but it occasion-



*170 face page 112.*

FIG. 40.—INSTALLATION OF THE SORONG OF IMPERRI, SHOWING TASSO MEN, AND THE LAKA WITH HIS SHIELD, TO RIGHT OF THE PICTURE.





ally happens that natural curiosity will induce a woman to secrete herself, and thereby, in disobedience to the Poro law, become acquainted with some of the mysteries of the Poro. The superstitious belief in such cases is that sickness follows, and during her illness the woman confesses to a Tor-Tor Behmor, or country fashion man, who reports it to the Soko—another head man of the Poro. After consultation, the Poro devil is sent out to seize her, and she is taken to the Poro bush; fines are imposed upon the woman's family or husband, if she has any, before anything can be done in the matter. When they are paid she receives Poro treatment, and after she has got well she is initiated into the Poro order, in the same way as a man and receives the name of "Mabori." She is then considered to be both man and woman, and, although she may be married, she has various broad privileges, and whatever she may do she cannot have what is known as "woman palaver" given to her for what otherwise would be treated as a most serious offence. In the Sherbro language this woman is called *Deh-Boi*, meaning Poro woman. At the ceremony described such a Poro woman formed one of the royal procession, and I was informed that three other Poro women were then located within the town.

Besides this social and political Poro there is also a Poro which is placed upon trees, streams, fishing-pots, fruit trees, oil palms, bamboo palms, growing crops, and in fact upon all and everything that is required to be reserved for any particular use. This Poro frequently takes the form of medicine which has been prepared by the medicine man and is placed in some conspicuous part of the tree, ground or whatever it may be upon which the embargo is put. By this means much of the produce of the oil palm is

lost, as the superstition attached to this medicine is very great. Where a dispute existed between chiefs and people, the Poro placed upon the oil palms to prevent the nuts from being picked was frequently not removed for some years, causing the entire waste of the produce; for people were not even allowed to pick up the palm nuts which fell to the ground. Naturally they felt this Poro to be very oppressive. It was the cause of continual complaint, and lay at the base of many serious tribal disputes throughout the country. Things at last became so bad that it was necessary for the Government to safeguard the interests of the people, and the difficulty was happily met by the introduction of the Poro ordinance at the end of 1897, which has proved a great blessing to the people—giving them what they never previously enjoyed—the right to participate in the natural wealth of the country, and making them feel for the first time that the load of oppression had by the judicious action of the Government been removed from them, allowing them that freedom and liberty which they had hitherto never known. Figure 42 shows two boards, upon which is some Arabic writing, prepared by a Mohammedan Mori man at the instigation of a certain chief, for Poro purposes.

This was done quite recently. Upon my visiting this chief's town a few months ago, the people brought complaints to me, reporting that this man had placed a very bad medicine upon oil palms which did not belong to him, thereby preventing the people from gathering the oil-nuts.

I immediately had this medicine removed, and the case having been brought into court and abundantly proved, the chief was fined under the Poro ordinance, and in

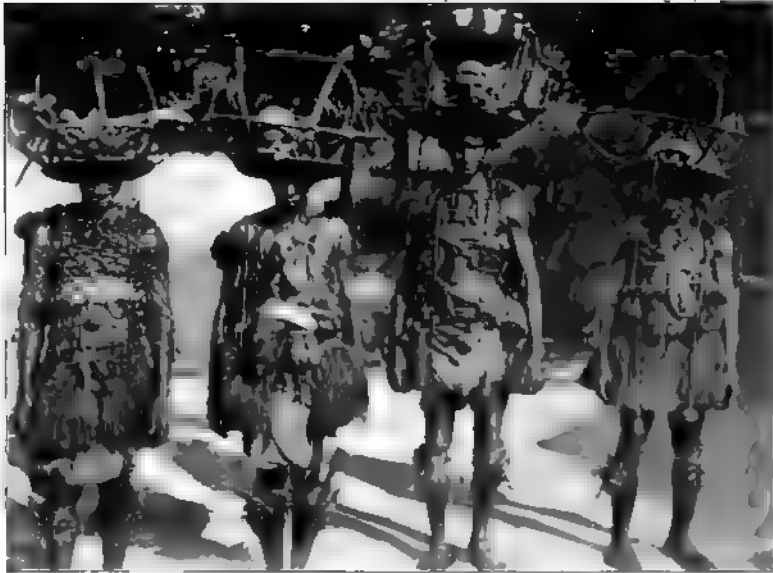


Fig. 41. THE PORO SECRET SOCIETY - GROUP OF TASSO MEN.  
IMPERRI COUNTRY. (Page 132.)



[To face page 134.]  
Fig. 42.—PORO MEDICINE, PLACED UPON OIL PALMS.  
SHERBRO.



default put in gaol for two months ; his people making no effort to pay his fine, although they could easily have done so. Witnesses giving evidence could not be induced to handle these boards,—as they stated that the medicine was exceedingly bad. This will give an idea of what influence fetish has over people. The whole affair was a valuable object lesson ; bringing home to the native mind the beneficent power of the British Government, which they seemed thoroughly to understand.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SECRET SOCIETIES—(*continued*)

#### II.—THE BUNDU

THE Bundu is a society that affects only the women, and it is worked with even greater secrecy than the Poro. The Bundu bush, where the young girls are trained, is always selected in a very secluded spot and there is nothing to give any indication of its whereabouts. It is enshrouded in mystery.

Sometimes, as I was travelling through the upper district, a group of whitened Bundu girls, as shown in Figure 43, accompanied by their duenna, would be drawn up at the side of the path to do me honour as I passed. By way of salute they raised their arms above their heads, then all together they uttered a weird sound, which once heard can never be forgotten. It is one long-drawn note, which presently grows louder and then gradually dies away; while uttering this note they bend forward until their hands touch the ground, when they slowly rise to their original position. Sometimes, when you are not aware that you are anywhere near a Bundu bush, this unvarying chant, or rather wail, betrays the neighbourhood of their encampment.

These young Bundu girls are under the entire control of



Fig. 43.—BUNDU GIRLS (WHITENED).

*(To face page 136.)*









*(To face page 137)*

Fig. 44.—BUNDU GIRLS WEARING FETISH.MEDICINE, UPPER MENDI.

some of the elderly women of the town to which the Bundu is affiliated ; and the country laws in connection with the Bundu are so exceedingly severe that for any man to attempt to penetrate within its sacred precincts would probably mean death. It is in the Bundu that the girls are initiated into certain secret country customs appertaining to their sex. The entrance fee for a chaste girl is a bushel of clean rice, a fowl, about a gallon of palm oil and, when procurable, one handkerchief and a bottle of rum. If the girl is unchaste, a country cloth will suffice ; but after medicinal washing every girl must pay the value of a head of money £3. The Bundu session is generally held during the rice season. The fees are divided amongst the medicine women and the Bundu devils. While in the Bundu bush all the girls wear round their waists several ropes of bugle beads, called *Piso*, made from long thin cane, and upon their high coiffure is usually a cluster of circular seeds resembling a bunch of large black grapes, which is a Bundu medicine charm, having a fetish signification. Except on special occasions this may be said to form their entire costume.

Figure 44 shows four Bundu girls, daughters of big chiefs, decorated with this Bundu medicine. It will be noticed that they are all wearing a leopard's tooth, which is a sign of their having been free born, that is, not in slavery. They all have massive silver armlets, and gree-gree medicine charms are hanging over their right shoulders. The Bundu cicatrices upon the front of their bodies are very clearly defined. All of these Bundu girls are wearing loin cloths, known in the country as *Tutunias*. One of these girls was about to visit her father, a big chief of the adjacent town, and

was taking her young friends with her, when I met them and asked them to stand while I photographed them. A sanctity envelopes all Bundu girls; they are perfectly secure in walking where they please within their bounds, the Bundu medicine being all powerful in the eyes of the natives.

Any persons having the means can send their girls to this Bundu retreat, or, as it is in reality, convent. It not infrequently happens that a child of nine or ten years of age is betrothed before entering the Bundu, and is kept there at the expense of her *fiancé* until she is of a marriageable age, when, amidst great rejoicings in the town, a firing of guns, a killing of goats, sheep or fowls, the girl is removed from the Bundu and presented to her husband. Previous to this she is greased all over until she has assumed a high polish, and she is adorned with as many silver ornaments of the most heterogeneous description as can be borrowed for the occasion from the friends of the family. She is loaded with long silver chains, to which are attached large silver plaques containing some Mori fetish charms; with long silver armlets, silver bangles, and anything and everything in the way of country-made silver work; all are massive and rough, but all must be of silver. As may be supposed, the contrast of so much brightened silver against the polished ebony body is very striking, and, although very barbaric, the effect is uncommonly good. The betrothal consists of an arrangement with the child's parents for the barter of the girl, which is fixed at £3, that may be paid in kind. Amongst many other accomplishments which the girls are taught in the Bundu is dancing.

As will be seen from Figure 45, the dancing costume



Fig. 45.—BUNDU GIRLS IN DANCING COSTUME.



[To face page 138.]

Fig. 46.—THREE KAMBEKS OF THE YASSI SOCIETY. (Page 145.)



consists of a netting of country cotton worn over the body. Long bushy bunches of palm-leaf fibre are suspended from the thickly plaited bangles of the same fibre round the arms and wrists; various sebbehs or gree-gree charms hang from the neck, and short knickerbockers of country cloth tied above the knees with country string complete the toilet. To these knickerbockers are fastened small pieces of hollow iron with little rings loosely hanging from them, which, as the dancing goes on, jingle not unpleasantly, for country iron gives out a somewhat rich sound. The chief feature in the get-up is, however, the dressing of the girls' faces with strange devices, produced by the smearing on with a finger of a substance called wojeh, composed of white clay and animal fat.

The girls dance to the music of the sehgura, a small gourd with a longish neck, covered loosely by a netting of hard seeds strung upon country thread, which is shaken by the women and also to the sangboi or tom-tom of the men. The girls not only dance together in a miniature ballet but execute very excellent *pas seuls* in the most creditable and pretty manner; and after an unusually well performed and difficult dance, some of the elderly women present rush excitedly into the arena, embrace the successful dancer, and at once commence to besmear her face, neck and shoulders with a liberal supply of grease—amidst the frantic yells and gesticulations of delight from the ordinary onlookers—many of whom manage to find some trifle to present to the dancers after the performance is over. At the conclusion of the entertainment the girls are escorted back to their place of concealment—the whole affair being conducted in the most orderly and decorous fashion.



Before the girls leave the Bundu they must be formally washed. Some parents, however, do not wish that their children should be washed until they are affianced, to preserve chastity; as until they are washed they will remain under the medicinal fetish influence, although they may have left the Bundu bush. On the day of washing, whether the girls are affianced or not, they are all brought out of the Bundu bush and are marched in procession around the town to which the Bundu belongs; the head medicine woman or Mashu leading. She is followed by several devils in their costumes. The Bundu girls are likewise followed by their female relations, who hold up a small branch of leaves in each hand, as they proceed singing to the music of the sehgyras, played by the sehgyra musicians. No men must take any part in the ceremony although they may look on from the houses. The girls are then brought down to the water side, and those who are leaving the bush are washed in the medicinal concoction of herbs and leaves which has already been prepared and conveyed there. This being finished they are taken back to the town and are located in the chief's barri or court-house under the surveillance of the big women of the place, and their female relations for three days and nights; after this they are at liberty to leave and go where they please, some of the parents being in attendance to receive them.

#### THE BUNDU DEVIL

The Bundu devil is a medicine woman who is believed to be capable of casting spells for good or evil over the men. There is generally a Bundu devil in any large town



Fig. 47. THE BUNDU DEVIL, UPPER MENDE. *(C. J. J. page 140.)*



belonging to an important chief ; but she does not appear in her peculiar costume unless she is especially called out to look into some misbehaviour on the part of the men, or upon some gala occasion, or upon the visit of strangers whom it is wished to honour. I had myself many opportunities of observing this remarkable personage—who naturally inspires the people with much awe and commands the very greatest respect from all classes. Her distinctive costume is unvarying, all Bundu devils being similarly attired, except as regards their head-piece, which admits of some slight variation. No part of the body may be visible, consequently the cloth casings of the arms and legs are sewn up at the extremities, and in each covered hand the devil carries a little bunch of twigs with which she goes through a sort of dumb show—as she never does any talking. Her dress is of long shaggy fibre, dyed black, and over her head she wears a grotesque wooden mask. Occasionally she indulges in a dance, but, owing to the great heat produced by dancing in so heavy a dress, a little goes a long way, and after a few moments she retires to some quiet part of the town, where her attendant, who is always present with a large country mat, unrolls it and encircles the devil, who is then able to remove her mask and obtain a little fresh air away from the gaze of the madding crowd. I have had the honour of shaking the covered hand of a good many of these devils, whose fetish power is very great. After leaving the Bundu bush the girl if she likes can attain distinction in the higher degrees of Bunduism, of which there are three grades :—

Digba, the lowest or first degree.

Normeh, the Bundu devil or second degree, and

Soweh, the head woman, third degree.

The Bundu devil is in the second degree of the medicine. If the girl wishes she can simply become a Digba ; she then has the great privilege of holding the mat before the devil at any function. She must not assume too much familiarity; she must remain medicinally at a respectful distance, the mat being between her and the devil. All large towns in Mendi have devils on hand ready to take up the cudgels against the mere man who may violate the stringent Bundu laws and interfere with the Bundu girls. When such a thing happens, the Bundu devil, arrayed in all her barbaric grotesqueness, and attended by a few Digbas, arrives upon the scene, and having discovered the miscreant in the town, they approach him, and when within a few paces they stop, and the devil points one of the bunches of twigs which she carries straight at him, and then reverses the action and points to the bush. This is called *giving the palaver*, signifying that he must follow them ; which he speedily does, so efficacious is the medicine, and so great the fear and fetish superstition in connection with these medicine women. The cortège proceeds to the barri, where the palaver is given over to the tender mercies of the chief, who begins by imposing all kinds of court fees ; and damages are claimed on behalf of the head medicine woman of the Bundu. In the event of the defendant not paying the demands made upon him, he is stocked, and formerly would have been sold into slavery. But there is always a loophole through which to escape these extortionate demands. If he were a wise man and had the means he would go quickly to the head woman and settle matters with her for the value of a head of money. Girls who have misbehaved themselves are flogged



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Fig. 48.—BUNDU DEVIL WITH ATTENDANT DIGBAS.



in the Bundu unless their parents or guardians pay to prevent it; generally small presents of cloth or tobacco suffice to get them off. As I have said, the devil never talks, but gesticulates with the bunches of twigs; but whenever it is necessary to explain anything, it is a Digba who does it. When the devil comes out to arrest a person she does not bring any music with her, but on festive occasions she is accompanied by women shaking the sehgura.



## CHAPTER XV

### SECRET SOCIETIES—(*continued*)

#### THE YASSI

THE Yassi Society belongs both to the Sherbro and Mendi countries. Apparently in a measure it works conjointly with the Bundu Society ; but while it is professedly a society for women, it does not object to the admission of men of the social Poro order at some of its meetings. Under certain conditions, indeed, it becomes even imperative that they should be initiated into the mysteries surrounding it before they can be allowed to enter the Yassi house for the purpose of coming under the influence and treatment of the Yassi medicine, when they may have been attacked by it. All Yassi women must also be Bundu women, although Bundu women need not necessarily belong to the Yassi. The supreme head of the order is the Mama Behku ; the next in importance is the Yamama, followed by Kambehs of different positions—the Kambeh Mambu, the Kambeh Kehwai, Kambeh Maba, and Kambeh Mama. This last is also the sword-bearer. There are three men drummers, who perform upon a long wooden drum, called *Kereh*.





Fig 49. BACK VIEW OF THE THREE KAMBHS SHOWN IN FIG. 46. *(To face page 143.)*

Spots are the outward distinguishing sign of this remarkable Yassi order ;—everything must be spotted, the house, the Kambehs, the sword, the drum, everything must be spotted, excepting the wooden Minsereh figures, which are entirely black. These spots are simply patches of coloured wash—white, black, yellow, and brown—and are indiscriminately put on.

The Minsereh images (Figure 51) are always female figures, and perform a very important part in the working of the fetish ; as it is through them that the information is to be supplied in respect to any matter which may be brought forward. The Yassi medicine house is always located within a town or fakai, and is known to all by coloured spots daubed over it, whereas the Bundu location is a secret place in the bush.

There seems to be no distinctive barbaric costume ; indeed at certain ceremonies it would appear that as little clothing as possible is worn. Take for instance the decease of a Yassi woman, where barbaric rites are carefully observed. The body, covered by a country cloth, is placed upon a mat, which the women of the order carry round the house, dancing and singing to the noise of the long wooden drum, and the shake shake sehuras of the women. The dancing procession is headed by the Kambeh Mama, who points before her a long drawn sword, and another Kambeh carries the Yassi medicine in a horn. None of the women wear any clothes, there is simply a sufficiency of strung beads around their waists.

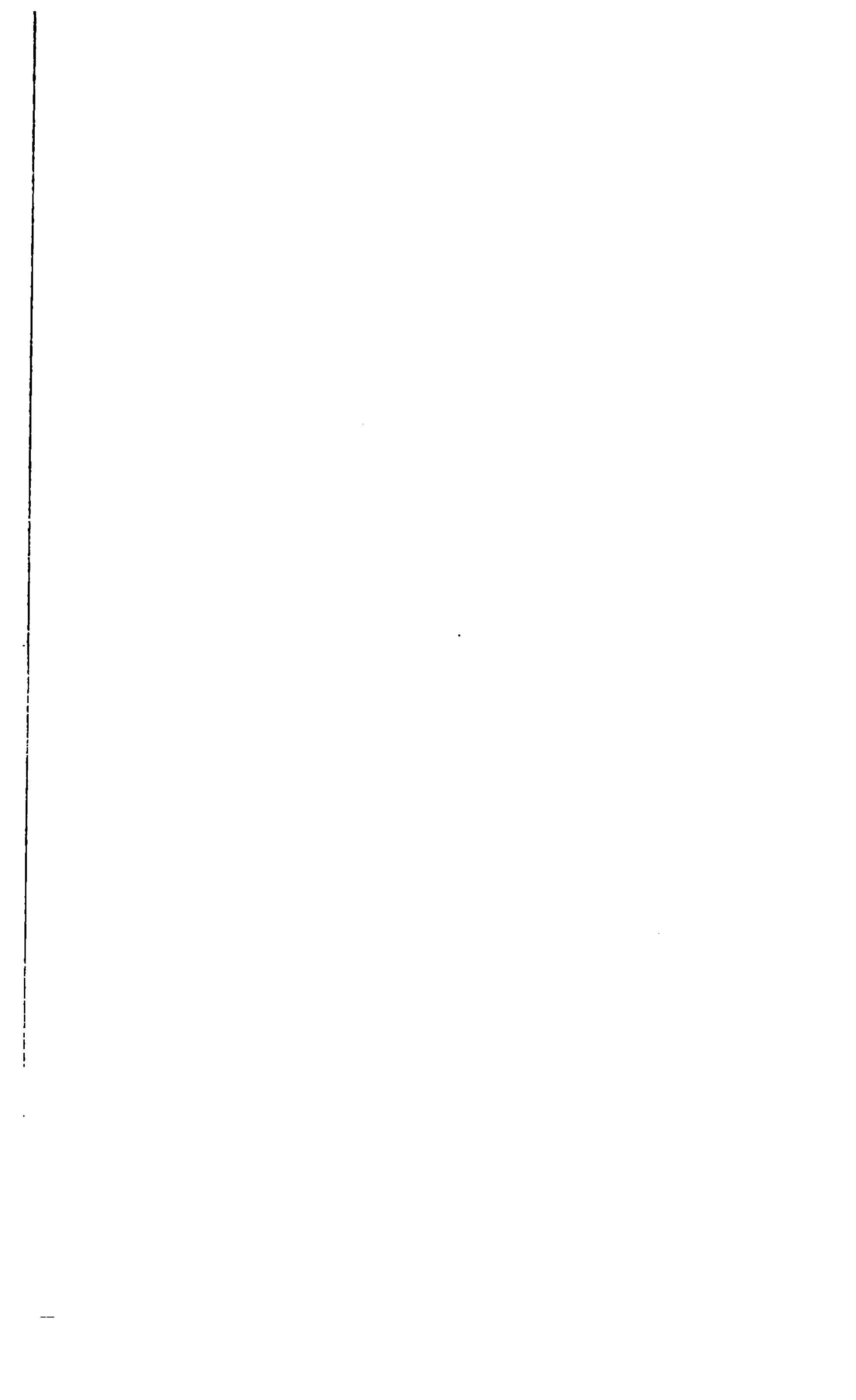
The Kambehs, as will be seen in Figures 46 and 49, are spotted on the forehead and shoulders by blotches of coloured wash. The morning, about 9 o'clock, is the most usual time for conducting this funeral ceremony, but it is

necessary that one night from the time of death should pass before it takes place. This is spent by the Yassi women in dancing and singing inside the spotted medicine house. They are then in a complete state of nudity ; the beads by the violent movements in the dance having been broken and then fallen off. After the body has been danced round the house, it is taken inside, and some of the women who took part in the dance are selected to prepare a certain medicinal concoction called Saweh, consisting apparently of leaves which are mashed with water in a wooden bowl. One or two fowls are killed and dipped in their feathers into this liquid compound, which is then sprinkled by means of these fowls upon every house in the town and upon all persons who are not of the Yassi order, so that the spirit of the deceased may not trouble any one, and also to prevent the Yassi medicine carried by the Kambeh Mama from having any injurious effects upon them. After the women have finished their part of the ceremony the body is handed over to certain Poro men, who hold a post-mortem upon it for the purpose of ascertaining whether the deceased was connected with witchcraft. The body is opened and the liver is removed and put into a bowl of water. If it floats it is considered an undoubted sign of innocence, and the deceased is then said to have *Kundinteh*, the literal interpretation of which is "clean belly." Every mark of respect is in this case to be shown, and the family is entitled to bury the body in the town. When a post-mortem is about to take place all the people in the town must leave it and remain near by. The examination is conducted inside the Poro bush of the town ; and if it is discovered that *Kundinteh* existed, then a devil of that order, called Bahum, who is always at hand at such a time,



*[To face page 146.]*

**Fig. 50.—THE YASSI SOCIETY-MEDICINE HOUSE.  
(The small House under the Silk Cotton Tree X.)**



gives vent to a peculiar scream, and the big drum is beaten to intimate to the town folk that the deceased had successfully passed through the ordeal ; they thereupon return to the town, and the women immediately commence to wail. Dancing and singing and a good time generally is kept up for three or four days.

The relations and friends of the deceased then provide cloths to be buried with the body. The interment is undertaken by the men ; the remainder of the medicinal preparation in the bowl being first sprinkled over the body.

The wail cry after a death takes place a little before daybreak and continues until daylight ; but should any friends arrive who were not present at the first cry, they can wail at any time, assisted by any one who may be disposed to join in. If it is shown that the deceased was not clean, by the liver not floating, then a Poro devil shouts out, and no person must presume to cry. Silence must prevail ; no presents must be given, and there must be no dancing, singing or playing, as what has been discovered is considered to be a disgrace to the family. The body will simply be buried naked in the bush.

Within the Yassi house, which is an ordinary mud hut, the medicine is kept in a place that has been partitioned off by means of country mats. Near to the medicine are placed the Minsereh images, which are supposed to co-operate with it. When it is desired to consult the Yassi fetish the Yamama or Kambeh, dressed in a white cloth wrapper and wearing a white handkerchief on her head enters the sanctum ; but while there she must remove these things, as she is not allowed to be in the presence of the medicine wearing clothes. Presently she reappears in the same white costume, walking backwards, carrying a

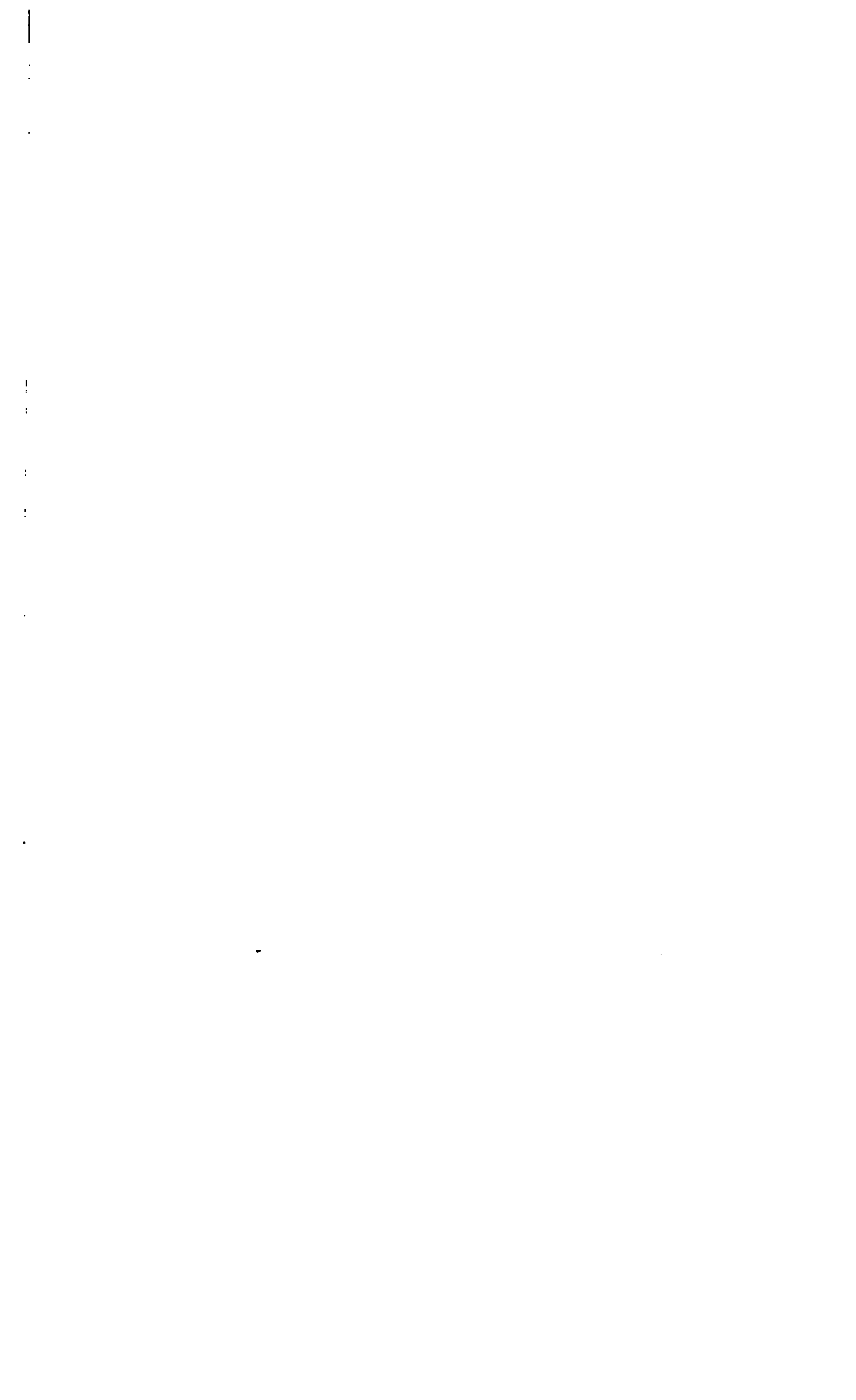


Minsereh with its front to the mat. This she does twice, and then turns round to the people, and the image is turned towards herself. She holds the image by both hands at the waist, so that she can work it to and fro as on a pivot. She then puts questions to the figure, invariably of a leading description, such as the following, in the case of a sick man alleged to have been attacked by the Yassi fetish: "Did this man spy us when we were making our Yassi medicine?" A gradual inclination of the figure, "should its heart be cold" (that is when the figure intends favourable answer), takes place, until it rests upon the woman's chest, signifying that he did not spy them; but should it be otherwise the figure will remain stationary. "Did the Yassi catch him?" That is, attack him. "Yes." "Is he suffering from the effects of the medicine?" "Yes." "Will he die?" "Yes," and so on. Everybody is perfectly satisfied with the decisions, as the belief in the fetish power of the Yassi through the images is very great, and it is considered to be quite infallible. A Yamama informed me that the great power of the Minsereh was received by the anointing of it with the Yassi medicine, without which it could not perform its fetish functions. After anointing it was placed by the side of the medicine to communicate with it. It then made the Yamama dream; upon her awakening the image was to be re-anointed before it was removed from the presence of the medicine, and the Yamama was not to speak to it until it was re-anointed; afterwards she could do so and invoke its fetish influence to prevent whatever was impending for good or evil. All Poro men can go into the Yassi house but should any men surreptitiously enter who are not of that order the Poro devil will catch them, take them into the Poro bush, and compel them to



*[To face page 148.]*

Fig. 51.—MINSEREH FETISH IMAGES USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE YASSI MEDICINE.



become members of the fraternity. The Yassi house is also a kind of hospital for any person of either sex, who will pay, and who may have been affected by the fetish. The Yassi fetish medicine is available all the year round, excepting during the month of July, when it is closed for vacation. During that month, if there is a patient under treatment, the Yassi cannot be obtained, but recourse must be had to outside remedies.

#### THE TWIN HOUSES, OR SABO.

Another kind of fetish for the obtaining of money from the superstitious is the twin houses, or Sabo, the working of which is carried out by twins, who may be any two persons of either or both sexes who are actual twins, or are one of twin children of different families. The elder twin is called the Sau, and the younger the Jina, irrespective of sex. It is always necessary, to render the fetish medicine efficacious, that it should be deposited beneath specially erected twin temples, as shown in Figure 52. Either the Sau or the Jina has the Fera Wuri, or twin stick, that is, has the power to set up these twin houses and to administer the medicine. Although both sexes can apply to the Sabo, it is more generally used by women in regard to their specific complaints, more particularly in cases of pregnancy, or the absence of it. A person wishing to obtain advice must first seek an interview with a Tor-Tor Behmor, or country fashion man. He proceeds to "look the Tor-Tor Beh or country fashion," and will either conclude that the person should consult the Sabo, or he will recommend that the assistance of some other fetish should be sought. Assuming that

the patient is a woman, said to be under the twin influence, it is necessary that she should be washed in the medicine and should set up the twin houses, which, of course, means an outlay. A meeting follows with the Sau or Jina, and the fees being paid a dance is arranged, to take place at the appearance of the next new moon, to which any of the town folk can go. The dance is kept up all the night, and at daylight the Sabo women, attended by some from the dance, proceed to the bush to collect all the materials for setting up the little twin places, and for preparing the ablutionary medicine. Sehigura music accompanies the procession, and before sticks are chopped down, leaves are picked, or grass for thatching is cut, all must be sung over and played over by the sehigura musicians. When a sufficiency of materials is got together it is put into mats and carried to the town, and the Sabo men begin at once to erect the twin houses, which are of different sizes, the larger being that of the first born or elder twin.

As will be seen from the illustration, these erections are of a very rough and primitive description. Under the grass-thatched roof is a sort of rudely made wooden grid, on this is spread a white cloth, upon it and about it are placed lumps of the hard, dark earth concretion formed by small ants known as the Bugga-bug. A long narrow strip of white cloth floats from a pole or flag-staff in front of the house, rice and fowl are cooked, and a portion is eaten before the house by the Sabo people, the remainder being put upon the grid with the Bugga-bug earth. The officiating twin bows to the house and goes through various incantations, and the medicine is produced.

The woman to be washed is then required to sit down upon a mat spread on the ground, her knees being angled,

her open hands resting upon them with the palms upwards. A few grains of uncooked rice are put upon her feet, into the palms of her hands, upon the top of her head and on her protruding tongue. A twin stands over the patient holding a live fowl, and she speaks to it, saying, "If it is true that this woman has been affected by the twin spirit the fowl must let all see that it is so by eating up the rice."

The fowl is then brought close to the different little patches of rice, and not being often accustomed to such luxurious food, loses no time in gobbling down the grains ; and the woman is pronounced to be unmistakably under the influence of the twin fetish. She is at once washed all over in the liquid medicinal preparation, and a little is handed to her to drink. She then rises, a fresh cloth is given to her, and she leaves the original white cloth and the mat upon which she sat, and the proceeding terminates. The twin houses can remain as long as the patient is disposed to keep them in order. They are frequently met with throughout the Mendi and Sherbro countries. A Sabo woman can perform the medicinal washing upon either sex, but a Sabo man can only wash a man, although he can assist with the medicine in the case of a woman. It not infrequently happens that a married woman having applied for the application of the Sabo fetish, and received it, that the Tor-Tor Behmor intimates to the husband that before an efficacious working of the fetish can be expected, it is necessary that he too should be washed ; he accordingly agrees, and more fees result.

I had for years seen these little twin houses all over the country, but I associated them with other things. It was not until a few months ago, when I met with the particular pair in this view, that from the head man of

the village, who could speak a little broken English, I ascertained what they really were. He informed me they were twin houses put up by a woman belonging to the town who had twins both very sick. She had consulted the medicine man, and he had advised her to apply to the Sabo medicine. She took the Sabo medicine, in the manner already described, as the medicine man told her the children could not get better until she had taken the Sabo.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SECRET SOCIETIES—(*continued*)

#### HUMAN SACRIFICES—THE HUMAN LEOPARD SOCIETY

BEFORE the native rising in 1898, when an abortive attempt was made to put an end to British and all other civilising influences, a part of the Sherbro known as the Imperri country had long been notorious for possessing a medicine peculiar to the place, called Borfemor (a contraction of *Boreh fima*, medicine bag). This Borfemor was a solid preparation, apparently harmless in itself until anointed with human fat, when it became an all-powerful fetish. Of course to obtain human fat people must be killed, and to procure victims the notorious Human Leopard Society was formed. The Imperri was the great centre of this institution. It does not appear to have been of any very great age, possibly not more than forty years or so old. I remember to have been told, some twenty years ago, that it was then merely a family arrangement, the members working only among their own relatives ; and that at the committee meetings of the society a relative of some member was selected, told off to be the next victim, and subsequently waylaid and killed by a man in the



guise of a leopard, who rushed upon the unsuspecting victim from behind, and planting a three-pronged knife of special make in the neck, separated the vertebra, generally causing instantaneous death. The body was then opened, and some of the internal parts were removed for the purpose of obtaining the fat, which was considered necessary to preserve the magical powers of the Borfimor. The Borfimor was a highly prized fetish, believed to be a panacea against all evil and capable also of procuring all good.

The society after a time becoming too extensive to remain a mere family concern, it appears to have been changed into a public institution ; that is any victim could be taken from the general community, and we know as a fact that the lives of many innocent persons were sacrificed in this manner.

The *modus operandi* for gaining adherents seemed to be this. When a visitor appeared in any village he was invited to partake of food, in which was mixed a small quantity of human flesh. The guest all unsuspectingly partook of the repast, and was afterwards told that human flesh formed one of the ingredients of the meal, and that it was then necessary that he should join the society, which was invariably done. The initiation fee was the providing of a victim ; but it did not necessarily follow that the new member should himself slaughter the victim, he need only furnish him ; there were persons who, upon payment, would carry out the murder.

Shortly before the rising it was found that the number of victims to the Leopard Society was rapidly increasing, and, as the greatest secrecy was observed, it was next to impossible to bring the criminals to justice ; even the





Fig. 52.—THE TWIN HOUSES, OR SABO MEDICINE. (Page 149.)



*To face page 155.*

Fig. 53.—MY STANDARD BEARER AND INTERPRETER ON A TOUR THROUGH IMPERRI. MURDERED AT IMPERRI DURING THE NATIVE RISING.

relatives of the victims being too terrified to divulge the smallest thing. For instance, when a witness was examined, the same answer was always given in reply to the question :

“ What did you see ? ”

“ Nothing. I only felt a great wind rush by.”

My own opinion was that they never did see anything, because the victim was always in a secluded spot near a thick bush. The leopard never went any distance, he was always in such a position, near an opening in the bush, that he could retreat instantly.

Figure 53 shows a very clever Mendi man, employed by the Government as a detective, and he made most useful discoveries ; he was afterwards a Court messenger, and at the time the photograph was taken he was my standard bearer and interpreter ; six weeks later he was murdered in the native rising. The following is a statement he made before me. I give it as it was taken down, merely altering the names.

“ I and a boy named Bokai went into the bush near to Matakong to pick something to eat. While there I saw four head men and plenty others. When we saw them we hid ourselves. We saw the head men take the Borfemor and rub it with blood. The people wore no clothes. After anointing the Borfemor, they tied it up by a long rope, talking to it all the time, saying :

“ ‘ Make no trouble meet them. Make they get slaves. Make English no sabby they get slaves for get free. Make they gentry.’ ”

“ Then they put the Borfemor into a box and took it to a house near the bush. I followed and slept in the town. I asked two of the head men what they were doing ; what

was all the blood I saw? They said it was the blood of a fowl. I said, 'One fowl can give all this blood?' They did not answer, but said it was medicine. I said I wanted to join. They said I must fetch money. I asked how much. They said four pieces of cloth, two bottles of rum, and two bars of tobacco. They said after that they would make the medicine, and I should have to give one person for the medicine. I said, 'All right, I agree.' When I left, I asked who was the king who got this medicine? They told me his name. He was the head chief for Borfemor. When a man was to be killed they must tell him and he would give the order to butcher him. They always gave him the skin of the victim's forehead to put on the Borfemor.

"I told this chief I wanted the medicine. He said, 'No palaver, the medicine was free to all.'

"At Matakong one head man told me they were to catch me, because I had found out their secret. Another said, 'No, they must not touch me because I was a stranger.' I told another head man to clean the road. He said, 'All right.' I went to Bogo to the police."

Happily the persistent and effective measures adopted by the Government have been so successful that I quite believe the Human Leopard Society is now simply a matter of history.

#### THE TONGO PLAYERS

Formerly when suspicious circumstances, such as frequent sudden deaths, or the continuous disappearance of individuals, as in the case of the victims of the Human Leopards, arose and baffled the local fetish, recourse was

had to the terrible Tongo player system; especially if cannibalism was thought to be at the bottom of the mischief.

To set this medicine going the intervention of a most appalling fetish had to be invoked through a class of medicine people from the upper country called the Tongo players.

As soon as the Tongo players had determined to comply with a request from a chief, they sent out their emissaries into his towns and villages to obtain information concerning suspected people. When all was ready the head of the Tongo, named Buamor Neppor, attended by his two principal assistants, Akawa (Big Thing) and Bojuwa (Great Thing), with their following, arrived in the principal town and proceeded to clear a place in the bush for their encampment, where they made their fetish medicine. This place of concealment was called Mashundu.

In the investigation one village at a time was dealt with. A messenger was despatched to call all the men, women and children to a meeting to be held on an appointed day.

The meeting was held on a cleared space, called the Korbangai, outside the town, to which the people had been summoned. They were then drawn up into line. Their names were called by a spy from their own village, who was in the pay of the Tongo players. Certain questions were asked. The names of suspected persons were then submitted to the medicine men, hidden in the bush, who professed to go through the ordeal by which the guilt or innocence of these suspected persons might be determined. The operator's ordeal was the plunging his hand into a cauldron of boiling oil and pulling out a piece

of hot iron. If the hand was burned it was certain proof of guilt ; if not burned, of innocence.

The victim thus being found out, he was brought before the head Tongo player, who asks him if he were prepared to pay money. If he were, time was allowed for him to send to his family ; meanwhile he was detained and stocked. Having got as much as they can out of the man and his family an excuse was made, and he is burned to death.

On some occasions a Tongo play was held. The players were arrayed in barbaric costume. They wore a leopard skin cap, the side flaps of which dropped over the face, a leopard tail hung down from the back of the cap and a sort of door bell was attached to the end. There was a leopard skin jacket ; the wrists, elbows and ankles were further adorned with strips of leopard skin ; the whole costume being completed by short cloth knickers, trimmed with leopard skin, and leopard skin gaiters.

The Tongo players came out and danced ; the head man and his attendant carried a knobbed staff set with sharp cutting instruments, called the Tongora, which was loosely veiled with leopard skin.

While dancing, the head man and his two attendants suddenly rushed up to the suspected persons and dealt them heavy blows with the Tongora, blows which may or may not have killed them at once ; but whether killed or not they were quickly taken away and thrown on the fire.

At an inquiry held by me in 1891—at Bogo Imperri, concerning the Tongo players who had recently been there—a witness, in reply to my questions, stated that he did not know how many persons had been burned at that play, but that he himself had seen eighty persons burnt.

The pyramid of calcined bones that I saw at the junction of two roads just outside Bogo was about four feet high ; and of course after such a savage exhibition the Government prohibited the Tongo players from practising their fetish any more, and they were compelled to leave the country under pain of imprisonment. A curious coincidence in this particular fetish performance was that a principal chief who had been instrumental in calling the Tongo men down was one of the first to be condemned and burned by them.

The Tongo players are already an institution of the past. The Government has re-organised the whole of this Imperri district, and neither the discovery of evil doers by the Tongo players nor the society of Human Leopards now exists. This is another instance of the civilising power of the Government.

Before this British intervention the people lived in a state of absolute terror, which prevented their cultivating their farms, or in fact of moving about the country at all.

Progress under the old *régime* was impossible. It was a system of terrorism and *espionage* pure and simple. If, without notice, a party went out from a village to work a plot of ground, they all returned safely ; but if there was any previous notice given there would generally be a victim.



## CHAPTER XVII

### NATIVE ORDEALS

#### TEHLANG (CAUGHT NOSE)

THIS is one of the principal fetish swears known throughout the Mendi country, and is practised by the Tor-Tor Behmor, or country fashion man. It is a fetish medicine alleged to be made from some part of the head of the elephant, and mixed with country made snuff. When the time for swearing arrives the medicine man, called the Shundu-Moi, or swear man, builds a miniature shed with a few sticks supporting a palm leaf roof, in the town where the ceremony is to take place. The medicine is kept in cow's horns, the horns being stuck into the ground within this little shed; generally a couple of horns are used, and the persons to be sworn give a fowl each and one or two kola nuts to the medicine man. The throats of the fowls are then cut and the blood is dropped upon the ground in front of the horns. The kola nuts are then split and thrown up to see which sides fall upon the ground; if they fall in pairs, that is upon the two inner or two outer sides, the medicine man may give at once a decision

upon the point at issue. But in the event of dissatisfaction with his decision recourse can be had to the medicine itself, and the contending parties can be sworn upon it. If it is agreed to swear on the medicine each party must bring a little gunpowder, which is put on the ground in front of the horns and fired. Then an oath is administered to the effect that, if in the matter wrong has been done to the other party, he swears that the medicine must eat up his nose. After this the medicine man gives him some of the snuff and he sniffs it into his nostrils. The other man does the same and the ceremony terminates, each paying to the medicine man a head of money. The medicine man wears no peculiar costume on this occasion. The swearing is done openly in the town, and before being sworn each person is examined to see if he has secreted any countervailing fetish charm about him. In some instances, the medicine man is sworn upon another medicine to show that he has not been bribed.

#### ORDEAL BY PALM OIL AND HOT IRON

A three-legged iron cauldron is filled with palm oil and boiled on the fire. Three small iron rings are put into it, a concoction of herbs and leaves is made up and placed in a basin beside it. This concoction is oily; the medicine man takes some of the mixture and rubs it over the right hand of the person who is about to go through the ordeal, who then has to thrust it into the boiling oil and remove one of the rings. If he is successful he is then requested to put it into his mouth, and if it does not burn his mouth he is declared to be innocent. If he is unable to do this without

getting burnt he is pronounced guilty and he is then taken to the barri where the native Court determines his punishment.

#### NATIVE WHIP (BATTU)

Used chiefly in cases of petty theft. A boy is called and given a small hand-whip to hold; the medicine man rubs the boy's wrists, also the thongs of the whip, with a preparation of leaves and herbs. He then proceeds to speak to the whip, saying: "If truly the whip is his medicine, and that he paid dearly to possess the fetish influence of it, and that it has never proved false to him, it must not make him that day ashamed before the people." Then the suspected persons are formed up into line, and the boy stands in front of them with the whip. The medicine man tells the whip that it should smell each one of the suspected people. Thereupon the boy plays the whip fancifully about them, and should it rest for a few moments upon any of them, suspicion increases. The man then directs the whip to cease smelling, and the boy stops. The medicine man instructs the whip to flog any of those whom it pronounces guilty; the boy goes up to them and belabours the guilty thoroughly, and continues flogging until ordered to desist. The guilty ones are then taken before their masters or the chiefs of the towns, who further punish them. This is considered to be quite infallible, and is a cheap method of detection, costing from one shilling upwards.

#### THE ENCHANTED BOWL (KARU SORTOR) FOR WOMEN PRINCIPALLY

A girl about six or seven years of age is brought forward, and upon her head is placed a country-made wooden bowl

with mashed dry leaves in it. This bowl having first been rubbed inside and outside with some fetish, the medicine woman rubs the child's wrists and ankles with the preparation in the bowl. She then speaks to the bowl, and the girl is desired to discover the thief. She proceeds to move on, and her head begins to wobble. She turns about, runs and stops, and follows the direction of the wobbling until she comes either to the thief or to where the stolen things are hidden. It is said that in some instances a considerable distance has been traversed before the discovery has been made. This method of detection is, however, not considered altogether infallible, but it is cheap, the cost being from one shilling upwards.

#### STEATITE DEVILS

Steatite or soap-stone is found in various parts of the Sherbro Hinterland. Now and then certain small idols of this sort of stone are dug up, and are regarded by the people as devils.

Their origin is unknown ; but as there are no native sculptors, nor have been for many generations, it follows that they must be either of great antiquity, or the work of foreign artists.

The natives regard them as altogether supernatural and the possession of one is a great object of ambition.

They are consulted upon questions of war, the getting of wealth, the procuring of good crops, and the success of proposed journeys. It is believed that if one of these images is secreted, say in a rice field, its presence will secure a crop double in quantity to the ordinary yield.

Each of these steatite devils is thought to be attended

by many satellites, who circle around him and carry out his commands. This devil is exceedingly sensitive, and if not treated with the utmost respect, and propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice and fowls, which are placed alongside of him, he will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted rice-flour must be first offered.

The powers of this devil are very considerably increased if a person is successful in obtaining the image by theft, because he maintains that, as the person who had him last in his possession was so careless as not to take proper precaution to safeguard him, the new owner who was so anxious to obtain him on account of his faith in his mystic power, that he was willing to expose himself to great risks in stealing him, must be rewarded. When it is desired to work this devil's powers on a growing crop, the image is most carefully located in some secret spot, unknown to all except the proprietor, his wives and family. It is placed upon a small bamboo stool under a little palm-leaf temple purposely erected for it, and must be zealously guarded. Should it however be stolen and the theft reported to the Tor-Tor Behmor or country fashion man, and he decides that the palaver must be given to the chief of the town, much money has to be paid. Should the matter be brought into the barri or native court, and the idol be found, it becomes the property of the chief of the town, who is the judge in the matter, and a fine will be inflicted for the larceny ; while both sides will be fined for not notifying the chief of having in their possession the "big man," as the idol is called. So the chief gets the idol, the fines and everything else.





*From a Photograph by J. Thomson, Grosvenor St, London |*

*| To face page 165.*

**Fig. 54. HIS EXCELLENCY SIR JAMES SHAW HAY, K.C.M.G., GOVERNOR OF  
THE COLONY OF SIERRA LEONE 1888-1891.**

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THROUGH THE HINTERLAND

#### CHIEFS AND TREATIES

I NOW propose to leave the Sherbro coast line and devote a few chapters to my up-country tours.

I have already said that the internecine wars of the Mendi Hinterland chiefs, which had been of constant recurrence, had greatly hindered the prosperity of the Colony and seriously affected the revenue. It had therefore been resolved, during the administration of Sir J. Shaw-Hay, K.C.M.G., 1888-91, to adopt a firm and greatly extended policy for the interior. The first steps taken were the appointing of two Travelling Commissioners and the establishment of a Frontier Police Force.

I was one of the Commissioners. In my official capacity I took over the south-eastern or Sherbro side, and at once arranged to penetrate into the remote parts where no white man had ever then been seen. My mission was to become acquainted with the country and the people, and to extend to the paramount chiefs who then ruled, an invitation to accept the privilege of entering into friendly treaties with the British Government.



This was in 1889, at the termination of a long and serious tribal war which had to a great extent depopulated and devastated much of the country.

The country I proposed to explore is that generally known as Mendi, the southern portion being Lower, and the northern, Upper Mendi, although a great many other countries are included under this name.

In the first instance I made for the town of Bandasuma, about thirty-five miles from the coast by the route that runs parallel with the Sulima river. My object was to consult at Bandasuma the great chief Mendingra of the Gaura country; but as I also wished to see for myself what had been the result of the late war I determined to reach Bandasuma by a circuitous route of about 200 miles through Mattru, Bongeh, Mafweh, Bandajuma, Pujahun and Falaba. I also wished to ascertain the state of feeling among the people and how things in general were getting on.

I accordingly started, with an escort of forty men, including police, interpreter, hammock-bearers, carriers, and servants. We had not gone far into the Krim country before, as I went along, I saw many white objects on the ground which at first I hardly noticed, but which upon inspection I found to be bleached skulls.

In the line of destruction extending over many miles, not a town was to be seen, the sites that they had occupied being then overgrown wildernesses; banana plants and kola trees alone testifying to the fact that here, not long since, had been human habitations. Bandasuma, in the Barre country, was then, and still is, a very noted town, but it too had been destroyed during the war and was being rebuilt. The Queen, Niarro, of that country, had

returned and was there with her sub-chiefs and some few people.

At Bandasuma I found it necessary to call the chiefs together, as it was evident that there was still a good deal of friction existing between them, which it was absolutely necessary to settle before we could make a treaty.

I therefore sent to the very powerful chief Mendingra, of Juru, in the Gaura country, informing him of my mission and requesting that he would come down to Bandasuma on a given day. Juru is about 40 miles from Bandasuma, and a little less inland from Sulima. In the meantime I was getting the people ready for a big meeting, which was to take place in about a fortnight. I shortly received word from Mendingra that he would come down in time for the meeting.

This meant that I should have to wait several days, so I went down to Sulima, which is on the Coast and only about thirty-five miles away. I stopped at Sulima until it was time to start again, returning by the route parallel with the river.

The Sulima is the only large river I met with and therefore deserves special notice. The surf-beaten sea-coast of Sulima is shown in Figure 62, facing p. 211. The Sulima river, which is quite half a mile wide at its mouth, is only navigable for the first twenty miles, as far as the Falls of Wedaro, half-way to Bandasuma. Wherever I came upon it, the Sulima was always wide. At the furthest point I saw it myself, which was at Songo in Luawa, about 180 miles from the sea, it was certainly not less than 100 yards in width, and it formed there the boundary between two large countries, Upper Gisi and Luawa.

A ferry-canoe was plying between the opposite shores. Upon getting into Bande, a considerable distance to the east of Luawa, I was informed that the Sulima not only ran through that country but was to be seen seven days' walk beyond, at a place called Fenele, in the Kormendi country. How much further it runs no one knew. In the upper regions this river goes by the name of Moi-a. Beyond the Falls of Wedaro the bed of the Sulima consists of large boulders, over which during the rains the stream rushes with a torrent-like impetuosity, coming down evidently from the great watershed in the mountainous regions far inland.

If modern science could render this river available for transport, the produce of the upper countries, which is to-day entirely lost, could be at once turned to account for commercial purposes, and the greatest natural barrier to the development of the country and its peoples removed. The Sulima traverses a pre-eminently oil-palm country. The oil-palm grows all around Sulima on the coast and at the furthest point I reached inland it was still flourishing luxuriantly.

By the route near this fine river then I returned to Bendasuma. Chief Mendingra did not keep me waiting, for on the morning of the appointed day I heard that he was then only a short distance away. About noon he came into the town lying down in a hammock, covered up so as to be quite invisible, which is the custom with chiefs when travelling by hammock. He was surrounded by a great number of his war-boys carrying guns, and swords, and cutlasses. He was very much frightened, thinking that he was going to be arrested and taken to Sierra Leone. After a few minutes he got down from his hammock and,

still surrounded by his people, came towards me. Dismissing my police guard, which contrary to my orders had been drawn up, and who were probably the cause of the chief's fright, I went forward alone to greet and welcome him, and in a few seconds disabused his mind of his erroneous idea. This appeared to relieve him.

An hour afterwards I held the large meeting in the barri, which was attended by a great concourse of people and many chiefs. Old grievances between chiefs were opened and made up, and when at last all these purely local and personal native affairs, that but for this Government intervention might soon have been fanned into another war, had been satisfactorily settled, the subject of the Treaty with the British Government was brought forward. Addressing the people through the interpreter I told them that for many generations tribal wars had been going on ; but that now the British Government would no longer permit these wars. It was therefore proposed that the chiefs should be invited to enter into a friendly treaty with the Government, pledging themselves to cease from war, and also to permit British subjects to come into their countries for the purpose of trading. If in future any dispute arose between the natives and such British subjects, the matter should be referred to the Government, by whom it should be decided ; and finally the chiefs were to undertake to keep their roads open. As there is no such thing as hurry among natives, it took a considerable time to put things clearly before them. It was for them an entirely new departure ; however they presently grasped my meaning, as I could plainly see by the questions they put.

At such meetings as these no immediate answer is ever

given. Consultation must take place between the paramount chief and his sub-chiefs.

The chiefs therefore retired, but shortly returned to the barri and put further questions, showing how thoroughly they understood what they were about, and again retired. At length the chiefs all returned, when the paramount chief came forward and stated that, having consulted his sub-chiefs, he should have much pleasure in entering into the friendly treaty proposed.

The entire treaty was then read aloud for everyone to hear, I reading it in English, the interpreter following in Mendi. After this I signed the treaty and the chief made his mark, and so did some of the sub-chiefs, the whole being witnessed by some of the police, who were able to write.

Proceedings then terminated, and festivities, to which the town was at once given over, were carried on until late in the night.

I was extremely pleased with the result of the meeting, as it was of the utmost importance that a treaty should be made with this particular chief Mendingra first of all, on account of the enormous power and influence that he exercised over the other chiefs in the adjacent localities ; and I could but feel that the signing of this treaty would greatly lessen my difficulties as I went further inland. I may add that the queen of this town was present, and that she did me the honour of taking my arm and allowing me to escort her to the barri.

To me it was of course a most anxious and fatiguing day, and at night, in spite of the singing, dancing and beating of tom-toms, I was thankful when I could draw down the mats over the openings of my hut and throw





*[To face page 171.]*

Fig. 55.—A MORNING HALT IN THE FOREST, TUNKIA.

myself upon my palm-cane bed,—glad that the first move had been successfully made, which would, I hoped, put an end to tribal warfare and ensure the future peace of the country.

The following day was spent in writing official letters, a somewhat difficult task owing to the racket that was still going on in the town. There was a continuance of yesterday's festivities, war-boys and people in a general medley parading the place—singing, shouting, yelling, thumping tom-toms, and beating hollow tortoise shells. In fact the town was a regular pandemonium, for the Mendi people are never happy if they are not dancing and making a noise.

The next morning, after considerable delay caused by my having to get the extra carriers whom I required, leaving the banks of the Sulima river, we started away cross country for the town of Garahun.

We soon entered a dense forest of gigantic trees. The trunks were of great girth and many of the projecting roots of considerable height, straggling all over the track and making it difficult for the carriers to get over them with the loads. During the morning a short halt was made in this forest, as shown in Figure 55. The march was resumed, but by some mistake I was never again in touch with my carriers during the day. They went right away, making for the nearest town. All my provisions were with them, consequently I had nothing to eat or drink but some swamp water, which thirst compelled me to take. I continued my journey until six o'clock. Darkness was then coming on, and so far it looked as if we should be bushed and have to bivouac all night in the forest. Bivouacking when one is prepared for it is all very



well, but when without food or water of any sort, and only leaves for a covering, it is not so pleasant, and by this time we were all ready for a good meal if we could have got it. But just as I was about to halt, as the night blackened and we knew not where we were or how far we were from any town,—having gone the whole day without meeting any fakai,—I saw a person coming along holding a red lantern. He proved to be one of my own carriers, who had been sent back with the lantern by the chief of the town that we were bound for, and had met us about two miles from it. The kind thoughtfulness of this chief was much appreciated by us all, for as we proceeded we found that it would have been impossible to have got along without a light of some sort, as we came upon a long stretch of water which we could hardly have got through without some disaster. This small lantern enabled us to proceed very slowly and cautiously through the forest, when upon going some distance, as we turned a bend of the track, we suddenly saw a great blaze of light. Upon nearing it we found it to come from about fifty men with long cane-palm flammers, which they held over their heads. These men took us safely through the water and right into the chief's town of Garahun in the Tunkia country, where we arrived about eight o'clock.

I had one bottle of Sauer Brunen amongst my things. This I took with a little whiskey, turned into my mud house and on to the cane bed and slept soundly all night utterly regardless of everything, having arrived entirely exhausted, too tired in fact to order anything to be cooked.

This town of Garahun was a clearing in the forest in which during the rainy season elephants are met. Hearing





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Fig. 56.—UPPER MENDI CHIEF, WEARING ELEPHANT PAD BANGLES.

that an elephant had only lately been shot, I had the "hunter" of the town brought before me with his gun, which I found to be a trade weapon costing about 18s.—and known as a "Long Red Dane"—with a flint lock.

With this weapon he was enabled to shoot and kill elephants. I purchased the tail of the beast he had shot, also some of the pads from its feet, from which the people make the elephant bangles which are worn by the Krubas or head warriors. The pad is buried in the ground until it is soft, when the bangles are cut from it and worn as depicted in Figure 56. As many as two dozen may be seen on one arm. Some of these bangles have a setting of small studs of a white metal that is quite soft. They are rarely seen near the coast, as they belong entirely to the up-country, where elephants are found. These elephant-pad bangles are worn only by the men; the women wear massive silver armlets, twisted iron bangles, or country string with a little fetish charm hanging to it.

It seems curious that an ignorant native with a gun which most people would not care to stand behind—with its gas-pipe barrel—should be able to kill these mighty beasts of the forest, when many a European sportsman equipped with the most expensive and modern weapons is not always able to succeed in doing so.

The same day this hunter went to the bush and returned with a very fine large boar which he had just shot.

The chief of this town of Garahun was one of those who had offered submission to Mendingra at Bandasuma and had made peace, after which he had also entered into treaty; but his town having been destroyed in the war he had only just begun to rebuild, and there were but a few houses in it. Afterwards it became a large town.

Remaining for one day at Garahun I passed on to interview the paramount chief, Pau-La-lama of Tunkia. The distance to his town of Gigbama was about seventeen miles; the travelling was very quick, being done at the rate of three miles an hour, owing to its being mostly over narrow bush tracks necessitating the use of a small hammock carried by two men only. Travelling is always much faster when this is the case, as for some reason or other the men seem always impelled to proceed with a small hammock at a jog trot. After travelling for three hours and a half I arrived at the town of Naiahun where I halted the men for a rest, and breakfast. I proceeded to discuss this little matter surrounded by the astonished townsfolk. As I was still using lump sugar and had not yet been reduced to the more portable saccharine, I presented one of the women with a lump. She received it and stepped back to join the crowd again. Of course she was entirely at a loss to know what to do with the sugar, but upon my gesticulating that she should eat it, a short discussion with those around her resulted in her breaking this one lump up into about forty or fifty pieces, one of which she distributed to each person. Simultaneously they raised it to their lips and in the most cautious manner got the flavour of it, still holding it between their fingers, minute as it was, and ultimately having satisfied themselves that there was no fetish about it, they consumed it in the most solemn way without a smile upon their faces.

Continuing the march, our destination, the large town of Gigbama in Tunkia, was reached about two o'clock in the afternoon. This was the town of the prime minister, who in reality was the principal man of the country, as the paramount chief Pau-La-lama was a very old and infirm

man, quite one of the antiquated school who liked wars and had been long at variance with the Gola tribe. This old chief, together with the chiefs of the neighbouring countries of Subu and Nomor, lived on the right bank of the Mano river while the Golas occupied the left, and perpetual fighting was the result. Bulwa was the residential town of Pau-La-lama and was some ten miles nearer the Mano river ; so he had to be sent for and came the following day. Shortly after my arrival at Gigbama, chief Mendingra came in, and to do honour to me directed his war-boys to go through the country ceremony of "Pulling Kutu," which is a display of sword feats by individual warriors.

A large arena was formed, and the performers took up their positions within it. Each warrior commenced by sweeping his sword in a semicircle over the ground in front of him with a curious flicking action. He then gradually worked his way, slashing out right and left, sometimes near the ground, and then again in the air, and gyrating as he advanced from the far side of the arena up to where I was sitting with the chiefs, slashing his sword all the time and bringing it so unpleasantly close to our faces that the wind it caused was distinctly felt. Then, having reached his goal and worked himself up into a state of frantic excitement, his movements suddenly ceased, and he dug the point of his sword into the ground. Leaving it in a vertical position immediately in front of us, he stooped, and my right hand was at once placed upon his shoulder in token of appreciation. He rose and retired, giving place to the next Kruba and leaving the sword still in the ground. At the end of the performance, according to custom, all the swords were returned to the performers together with some

small gifts. At this ceremony one of the Krubas, after getting desperately excited, suddenly stopped, tossed his sword up into the air and left the arena, remarking that as there was no one to kill, he could not continue the performance.

Sometimes it happens that the chiefs find it necessary to stop one of these plays, as a warrior will work himself up to such a pitch of frenzy as to be hardly responsible for his actions, and will cut himself about badly.

Having given the old chief Pau-La-lama an outline of the object of my visit, he at once sent his messengers to call in the sub-chiefs and head men from the outlying villages ; and the following morning I was enabled to hold a political meeting in the principal barri or palaver house in the town.

Many of these barris are of considerable size, and as the sides are open some hundreds of people can stand round them. When everything was in readiness and the chiefs, sub-chiefs and head men were seated inside, I, escorted by five or six police, left my hut, entered the barri, bowed to all the people, and then took my place at a table covered over with a rug or country cloth. My police escort, fully equipped with rifles and side arms, were drawn up at the back of me. I then stood up and, removing my helmet, in the name of the Queen, the Governor of Sierra Leone and in my own name, gave all the chiefs and people present a hearty welcome. I then resumed my seat, explaining that I was a high officer of the Government sent into their country to see it and to report upon it, and to extend to the paramount chiefs the privilege of making a friendly treaty with the great English Queen.

But before bringing forward the condition of the treaty,

the custom of the country demands that the paramount chief should be asked what news he had in his country. That is always the first question to be put at a great meeting. By this question it is intended not only to obtain the information, but to show respect to the chief before his people. If there is anything of importance he will mention it, but if not he will say that there is no particular news and that he has no palaver to bring forward. I then, as at Bandasuma, addressed them on the nature of the treaty in the way already described. As at Bandasuma, the chiefs withdrew for consultation, and after a while returned to the barri. The old chief then came forward and said that they had "looked their heads" (meaning that they had considered the matter), and that on behalf of his country he was ready to accept the responsibilities and was perfectly ready to sign the treaty. I was always extremely particular that the obligations should be clearly understood, and I was satisfied in going through the country afterwards, that every chief thoroughly knew exactly what these obligations were from the remarks that they made to me.

The treaty was signed, as were all subsequent treaties, by myself, the chiefs, and our witnesses ; I then left the barri accompanied by my police in the same ceremonious manner as I had entered it. All political meetings were carried out in a similar way, because I maintain that in going into a country of this description, particularly when the people are for the first time seeing a white man and he an officer of the Government, dignity and ceremony go a very long way to impress the people with the importance of his mission and the obligations that their chief has openly undertaken, not only for himself, but for his heirs



and successors. The remainder of the day was usually, so far as the people were concerned, given up to festivities. In the afternoon I went round this town of Gigbama to take general observations. I found several women busily engaged in making excellent country pottery, and I saw some very fresh-looking patches of the tobacco plant which the natives call "Tongoni." Afterwards, all through the country I saw this plant was always extensively cultivated, and was the tobacco used by the natives for smoking purposes and for snuff, although their methods of curing reduced the leaf to a most insignificant size.

In the evening I was treated to a Bundu Devil dance, which took place outside my hut, but having seen so many of these dances, there is no novelty about them, although I am always ready to appreciate the courteous attentions of the people in their endeavours to entertain me, primitive as those entertainments are.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THROUGH THE HINTERLAND

#### CHIEFS AND TREATIES—(*continued*)

THE following morning at seven I started from Gigbama in my single hammock along a narrow track through very dense and thick vegetation—much of it narrow glades in which the foliage shut out the sunlight. Through an opening here and there I could see much mountainous country. We crossed several extensive swamps and numerous running streams, most of which at this time of the year were fordable. Also many rice and cassada farms. In three hours we reached the large town of Kokoru, where a halt was made for an hour. Afterwards we continued the journey through similar vegetation, but over rather more hilly ground, with an occasional forest; some of these so cold and damp that it struck one with chill, until at last we arrived at Chief Mendingra's residential town of Juru, which is in the Gaura country.

The circular mud hut that I occupied there was somewhat larger than usual, and for the first time I met with mud beds, which are simply a solid block of hard dried mud about twelve inches thick, by about six feet four inches long. Three such beds were in this hut; three

sides of each were matted round, with the exception of a small opening to enter by. There were no doors to the hut of any description, but there were two open spaces, over each of which at night a mat was unrolled and drawn down. Having much to do at this town I remained for four clear days ; and every morning I received a complimentary visit from the chief, who was always accompanied by a considerable retinue of his wives and people.

The town-folk generally were extremely courteous ; offerings of bananas and ground nuts were continually being made to me, which I could not well refuse to accept, although every such gift compelled me to draw upon my slender resources in making return presents. Many small peace-offerings were also made to me, which invariably took the form of Kola nuts, the customary emblem of friendship.

Beyond Juru the country became much more mountainous, and travelling was very exhausting, as I had to do, *nolens volens*, much of the journey on foot under a blazing sun. The place I was next making for was Mendikama in the upper Gaura, twelve miles from Juru. *En route* we passed through several towns of lesser importance, and at Magbama I managed to secure a couple of good eggs. Eggs are always very scarce—because native people do not eat them, they seem only to use them for hatching purposes. I believe that there is some fetish objection to their using them as food ; so that usually when I wanted eggs they were taken from under a sitting hen, or else they had been kept so long as to be useless ; I therefore regarded this acquisition in the light of a god-send. They were immediately cooked, and together with a biscuit and some tea from my water-bottle, made my





Fig. 57. -MAMMY LEIBU,  
The Queen of Upper Gaura, Mendi.

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breakfast. Surrounded by at least a hundred of the astonished town-folk, composed principally of the gentler sex, I discussed the meal with a satisfaction and keenness that would have been worthy of a more sumptuous repast ; thankful, moreover, that in the midst of my semi-barbaric surroundings I still had an appetite, and for the moment at all events the means of appeasing it. My boys, too, had not been idle, for the courtesy of the town-people had been extended towards them ; rice and bananas had been provided for them, putting them all into a good humour and enabling them to continue their tedious march refreshed and contented ; for as one of them tripping by me with his load on his head, jocosely said : " Empty bag no able for 'tand up ; but that time he full, he better," from which practical, though not too elegant, remark I gathered that a most liberal quantity of food had been supplied to them.

Mendikama was reached about one o'clock. The Queen of this town was Mammy Lehbu, as she was called, sister to chief Mendingra, a dear old lady, who received me with the utmost kindness and cordiality. She very soon acquired a great fancy for a large bottle of smelling salts which I had had expressly prepared to a strength to suit the native requirements, and which she always alluded to as " hot sun," the application of which seemed to revive her. In this town, in place of silver ornaments, the women were all wearing bangles and bracelets made of country iron. Before taking my departure from the town I secured about a couple of dozen of these bangles in exchange for leaf tobacco, which was always welcomed. The next important place was Yandahu, in the Jave country, at which town the paramount chief, Vandi Saua,

resided. He gave me a very hearty welcome and conducted me to a house. He went away and shortly returned with one man leading a goat, another carrying a duck and a fowl, a third with a quantity of clean rice, and a fourth bringing up the rear with two country cloths. These things were put down in front of my hut—the chief asking my acceptance of them. I was very glad to accept them. The food was distributed amongst the police and carriers, as at that time it was customary to so dispose of all such food in this way. In the case of bullocks, as I have already stated, one-half I always returned to the chief, together with the hide and the head, but all other presents not of a perishable description collected on the tour were made up into loads, brought back with me, and sent to the Government in Freetown, where they were publicly sold, the amount realised being paid into the Treasury. At this town of Yandahu some of the women were busily engaged in making country pottery.

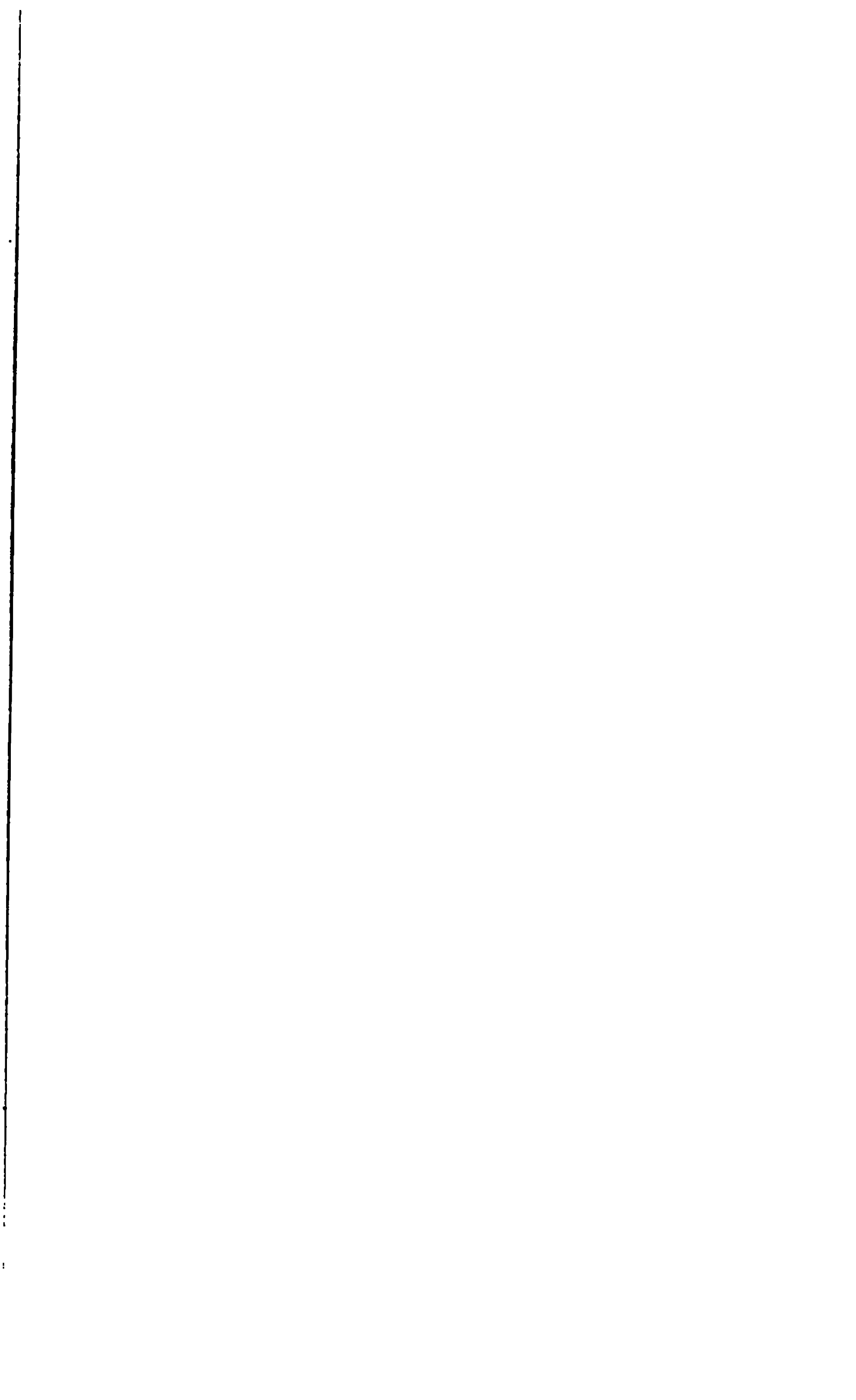
Practically the Government then knew nothing of this upper country beyond the fact that disastrous tribal wars had been carried on from time immemorial, and that naturally wars in the upper districts materially affect the lower countries. When a town is taken and many men are captured, if they are in a condition for fighting, they are sworn upon a country medicine and are compelled to fight on the side of their captors ; so that it is easily seen that a small body of men may rapidly become a large and powerful army. Very often, after a time, dissensions arise between the chiefs and the head Krubas, caused by dissatisfaction as to the distribution of the plunder, and the army splits up into factions. Individual Krubas then go ahead with their own little war. Some time ago when



U. S. GEO. SURV. PHOTO. 1882.

FIG. 58. GAMBIA-MANO RIVER. LIBERIA ON OPPOSITE BANK.





there was a war on the other side of the Mano river in the Tehwor land in Liberia, the war people gave me a great deal of trouble. The war was between the Gola tribe and the Tehwor people—the Golas having some of the Sofas to assist them. My difficulty was to patrol the bank of the Mano river on the British side so as to prevent the captured people from being brought across the river for the purpose of being sold, as the slave trade was then existing. Sometimes hundreds of the war-boys would come down to the water-side brandishing their swords in the air, yelling and dancing. The river was so narrow at these places that I was able to talk across to them quite easily, and I frequently succeeded in getting some of the head war-boys to come over to see me, assuring them that I would send them back again in safety. By this means I was kept well in touch with what was transpiring between the belligerents, who told me that they had no intention of bringing war into British territory. They had, however, to be most carefully watched for fully forty miles along the river bank. Their forces were so excessively mobile that they seemed to be all over the place at once. A town would be seen burning near by, and within a very short time the smoke of another one would be visible at a considerable distance away.

With so few police as I had at my disposal it was a very difficult matter to safe-guard the river side, so that I was compelled to call upon the friendly chiefs to provide native levies for patrol purposes. They did so ; but they did not like it. What they really wanted was permission to take their own war-boys across the river for the purpose of carrying on the war themselves, so that they also might capture slaves. This I would not sanction. Fortunately I

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succeeded in preventing to a very great extent the transportation of war prisoners from the Liberian side, across the Mano river for the purpose of being taken through British territory and away into the interior. I make this short digression to show the native system of warfare.

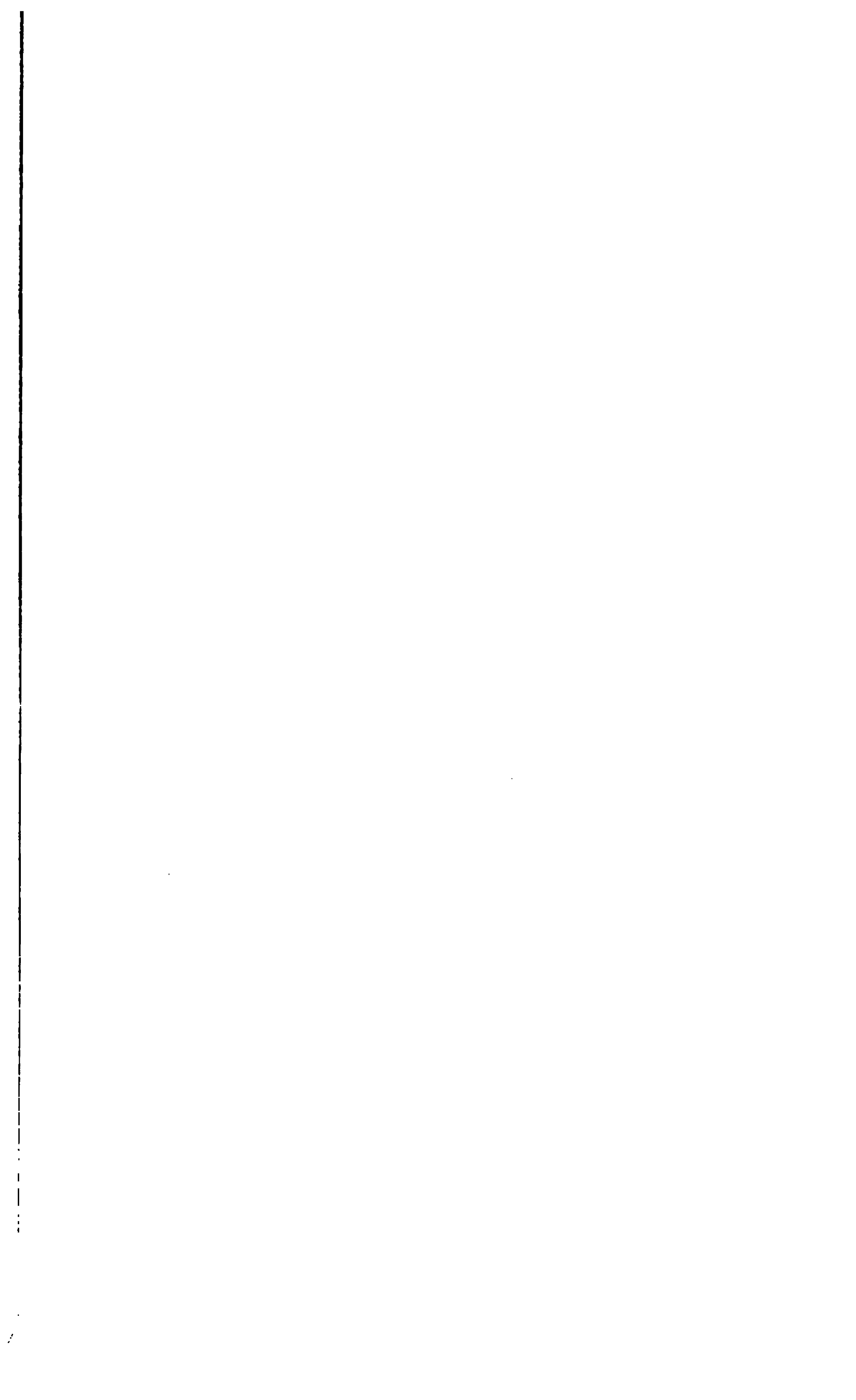
Let us now return to Jave. The country adjoining Jave is Mando, the paramount chief of which is Kabba Seh. A similar ceremony was gone through with him and his treaty signed. The next large town was Kangama, belonging to chief Momo Babahu in the little Bambara country, who also entered into treaty with the Government. This chief informed me that no person from his country had ever been to Sierra Leone. While in the barri at the time the treaty was signed, Momo Babahu reported to me how very pleased he was that I had arrived at such an opportune moment, because for some few years past he had been at variance with the paramount chief of the Luawa country, Kai Lundu, whose territory adjoined his; and that the dispute had assumed so serious an aspect that he expected to have war brought to him within the next few days. He said how very glad he would be if I could intercede and act as a mediator between them. I may here state that by the tactful and judicious forethought of the then Governor, Sir James S. Hay, I was empowered to arbitrate in any matters requiring adjustment in which the chiefs might ask my intervention, as in this instance; but before acceding to their request I always stipulated that they should absolutely abide by my decision after the palaver had been publicly brought forward and talked in the Korbangai, to which condition they invariably assented.

I promised upon my arrival at Kai Lundu's town of Kanre Lahun, which was just over twenty miles away, to



*[To face page 184]*

Fig 59. -WAR BOYS, UPPER MENDEL.



see what I could do in the matter. This appeared to relieve the mind of Chief Momo Babahu, who in himself was far less powerful, but who no doubt would have got the assistance of other chiefs, and the war having begun might have gone on for a very long time, with the usual disastrous effects to the country and people. I was consequently most desirous of putting an end to this feud if I could possibly do so. At this time of course there was no Protectorate. I was the pioneer in the country, opening it up, and the sphere of British influence had not then been determined. The country was therefore entirely under the control of the chiefs, but I hoped by judicious tact to prevent this threatened outbreak, and I left the town of Kangama with the full intention of finding a peaceful solution to the difficulty. The following morning at seven o'clock I resumed my march and stopped for the night at the town of Gehun, which was about thirteen miles distant. Owing to this dispute the roads had been left untouched for some time and the journey was through very wild vegetation, though the ground was tolerably level, with the exception of one high hill which divides the Bambara from the Luawa country.

Much of the distance was through forest, while some of it, and a good deal in fact, was through almost impenetrable low shrub, the bush track being at times hardly discernible.

As the chief of Gehun was a sub-chief of Kai Lundu there was nothing to be done in the way of a treaty. The chief was, however, most delighted to see me ; presented a goat, some clean rice, two country gowns and three country cloths, and in my honour had guns fired during the evening. Gehun was a large town, and had four war fences around it. It had two smaller towns close by, one

of which had three war fences. While at this town of Gehun I noticed a much greater diversity of patterns in the dressing of the women's foreheads with the wojeh, than I had hitherto observed, and I jotted down in my note-book a few of the extraordinary designs. They were for the most part in white or yellow. Some were merely outlines, while others were filled in entirely with the colour. The effect was not beautiful, but it is astonishing how soon one gets used to these semi-barbaric fashions which, although they may appear strange to the civilised mind, are of the utmost importance to the natives. The dressing of the forehead is the first thing to be done in the morning. A woman may be seen sitting by the entrance to the hut and by her side a broken shell within which is the wojeh, holding a little piece of glass in her left hand, if she has succeeded in obtaining a bit. Looking into it with much seriousness and admiration she dips the finger of the right hand into the dressing, and produces upon her forehead some strange device. Her costume may be scanty to European ideas, but it is ample for so hot a country, and so long as the wojeh embellishment of the forehead is not forgotten, native etiquette is satisfied.

The following morning I left, but not until eight o'clock, because during the night there had been heavy rain, and I wished to allow the leaves to get a little dry, as with the wet foliage in the narrow tracks continually rubbing against one, one's clothes very soon become saturated. The distance that we had to go was only nine miles, but without exception it was the worst piece of travelling that I had yet done. The track was either through entangled lanes of interlacing bush, sometimes enormously tall with

dense undergrowth, or else it was through low shrubby wildernesses with the passage so narrow that a person could only with difficulty pass. I suffered very severely from the sun and exposure, and upon my arriving at the town of Kanre Lahun, which I did at half-past one, I was so exhausted that I could scarcely move for the remainder of the day.

Chief Kai Lundu was away, but I was hospitably received by his head wife, who escorted me to a spacious hut and provided for the accommodation of my police escort and carriers, promising to send on at once to inform the chief of my arrival. The following day I was down with fever and complications. Lying on a hard mud bed is by no means conducive to alleviating one's sufferings when ill. I could not look at any food, but I remembered that I had two pint bottles of champagne which I had reserved in case of sickness. I determined to open one. I did so, and to my disgust I found that it was absolutely bad; I thereupon had the other one brought, with similar results. It seemed hard that these two bottles of wine, which I had carried over 200 miles and had so zealously guarded, should prove to be so useless at a time when they were so badly wanted. In a day or two I got better, although the fever was hanging about me. This town of Kanre Lahun was full of war-boys. When Chief Kai Lundu returned, although late at night, he at once came to see me. This was our first interview. He immediately professed great friendship, and I never had any cause to doubt his sincerity. I always found him a true friend. I made him understand my mission, and desired him to call his sub-chiefs and people to the meeting I proposed to hold next morning. He complied, and a very large



gathering was the result. The usual formalities were gone through, and he signed his treaty. After the signing of the treaty he sent several of his people away, and they presently returned with the following complimentary offerings :—

- 32 Country cloths.
- 2 Country gowns.
- 1 Small tusk of ivory.
- 1 Sheep, and
- 1 Bullock.

Seeing so many things come in, I remarked :

“ I hope you are not under the impression that I am about to give return presents of equivalent value.”

He replied that he did not expect it ; but that he was only too pleased to have an opportunity of showing his appreciation of the interest the British Government had taken in him and his people, as shown in my visit to his country ; and he begged that I would report his sentiments to the Governor when forwarding his friendly offerings. He said it had been his intention to have “ carried war ” within a few days to the Chief Momo Babahu ; but that as he had now signed the peace treaty with the Government he could not do so, and that he should at once disperse the war-boys I had noticed in the town. Before I left I saw that he had done so. I mentioned to him that Chief Momo Babahu had asked me to intercede on his behalf to try to settle their long-standing dispute in an amicable way. I talked the matter over with him, and finally arranged to act as arbitrator between them, when I next visited the country.

A year later, when going over this ground again, which I

afterwards did periodically, I brought these two chiefs together ; and in the Korbangai at Gehun, midway between their two residential towns, the whole matter in dispute was threshed out, before a vast number of people from both countries ; with the result that an amicable arrangement was come to. The old friendship between the chiefs was re-established, their people fraternising as they had not done for many years. Chief Momo Babahu was a very fine old fellow. I afterwards proved his worth. He was later on of the greatest service to me, as I shall presently have occasion to show.

The great Chief Kai Lundu would usually be accompanied by his singer, a man who was always in attendance upon him wherever he went. The object of this person seemed to be to sing the praises of the chief while he was talking to me, the singer continually brushing the chief down with a cow's tail attached to the end of a short stick with one hand, while with the other he played an accompaniment by striking together two pieces of country iron fixed upon his thumb and first finger. Having finished with the chief he would turn his attention to me, and attack me in a similar way, which, as it was considered one of the greatest honours possible, I had to undergo without a smile upon my face.

An incident occurred one day which showed me how very observant this chief Kai Lundu was. I had just come into the hut and had placed my mariner's compass open upon my little portable table, when the chief entered, carrying a bright iron spear, and came close up to the table to speak to me. The head of his iron spear coming near to the compass, the needle of it, which had been of course stationary, immediately vibrated. This caught the eye of

the chief, who at once asked what had caused it to move. I said, "I am afraid if I told you that you would not understand." He appeared to think for a moment, but nothing more was said upon the subject, and the previous conversation was resumed.

The next day, as I have just mentioned, I held a great meeting in his barri, which resulted in his concluding a friendly treaty with the Government. At the termination of the ceremony he approached me and asked if I would show to his people what he had seen yesterday. I had the compass brought, opened, and allowed the needle to become quiet. He requested as many of his people as possible to stand round while he, in the most dignified way, brought his spear near to the compass, when of course the needle was considerably excited. After the needle was again motionless, I told him to take a silver armlet from one of his wives and to touch the compass with it. He did so, when the non-movement of the needle caused a general look of surprise upon the faces of the people. The touching of the compass with the iron and silver was repeated several times, and the crowd dispersed, no doubt under the impression that some great fetish had been employed.

A photo of this particular paramount chief is here given (Figure 60). Kai Lundu was a man of small stature, but large intelligence, beloved by the people for miles around, who used to speak of him to me as their father. He was every inch a chief, with immense power and influence in the country, the first up-country chief to ask the Government through me that Frontier Police might be stationed in his town; even going so far as to build at his own expense barracks for the men and also official quarters. At first I could not persuade this chief to let me take his photo-



*(To face page 190.)*  
Fig. 60.--THE LATE CHIEF, KAI LUNDU. LUAWA, UPPER MENDI.



graph ; however, he said he did not object to my photographing his head wife, which was done. A good many up-country chiefs are very much afraid of the unknown powers of the camera, and are under the impression that they will not live long after standing in front of the lens.

A chief once came to me a few days after I had taken him, and asked me if it would do him any harm.

The next time I visited Kai Lundu's town and showed him a picture of his wife, he consented to have his own portrait taken, which is the one now reproduced. The beautiful gown which he is wearing is entirely of country make. It will be observed in this photograph that he has put on no ornaments. He had a very great objection to any ostentatious display either on himself or on any of his numerous wives ; and at a great meeting which I held a long time afterwards at Kangama, in which the principal chiefs in the adjacent country were present, some of them with their wives being covered with a mass of country-made silver chains and plaques, Kai Lundu drew my attention to it, saying that, although he possessed a great quantity of such things, he had not only appeared without any himself, but had also prevented his wives from so adorning themselves, as at such an important meeting he considered it rather detracted from the seriousness of the subject then to be considered, which was in relation to a Sofa invasion.

After this meeting I went on to Gorahun in the Mando country to the town of the paramount chief, who had been present at the gathering. His was one of the places threatened by a neighbouring tribe that was employing the Sofas. I found his town had recently been very heavily stockaded in anticipation of attack. Three days' journey

further on was the town of a most notorious chief, who was then giving a great deal of trouble, and was in fact one of the principal instigators in the native war, and was said to have a great many Sofa war-boys with him. My friendly chief strongly advised me not to go. He said the troublesome chief was awaiting me, as he was anxious to obtain my skull for a new drinking-cup he wanted. The idea amused me very much, and, in spite of my friend's persuasion, I left the next morning to proceed to the war-town of Kambahun. We got along very well until we reached the large town of Vahun, seven miles from my destination, when I found that the place was in a state of great excitement, as the people were in hourly expectation of being attacked by this particular warrior who was a noted Kruba or leader of war-parties.

The following day I went on from Vahun, leaving all my loads there with my eleven police and my carriers, intending, if possible, to reach the town of this evilly disposed chief.

Shortly after starting we came up to a number of his war-boys who appeared to be having a dispute with a lot of other people. We settled that palaver successfully and went on to his first town where we found the door of the high stockade closed. No one was visible. We shouted ; and then through a hole in the stockade we saw a man run down and peep through. He then ran back and apparently reported what he had seen ; for the head man, who was a sub-chief, at once came down with some of his people, opened the gate, expressed the greatest pleasure at seeing me, said he had heard of my coming and invited me and all my people in. He next said I must allow him to cook rice for my people before going on

to the big town, where the chief was waiting, as he was very anxious to see me, adding that he would himself accompany me.

When my men had finished their rice the march was resumed. The war town was only two miles away. I found the chief with a number of his armed war-boys outside the town in the Korbangai.

He immediately began to talk about his grievances and the treatment he had received from the other chiefs. He was in a highly excited state and talked on for two solid hours, frequently calling upon his people to confirm his statements, which they did with one shout of assent.

I let him talk on. He made no reference to my skull. At last I told him that I had heard what he had had to say outside his town ; but, as I had been informed that he had many Sofa war-boys within, I should like to pass through the war fences and look round the town.

He appeared to be pleased at this and we all went inside and I found he had a good many Sofas there. He was however quite friendly to me, gave my men rice and presented me with a live sheep, after which we left. I heard later on that he was killed by the other chiefs. I went back to the town of the chief who had given me the warning, and he seemed much surprised that I had returned in safety.

While I was at Kai Lundu's town, which really consisted of three separate towns close together with the Korbangai in the centre, the people flocked in from all parts. I was on view practically all the time ; my hut was constantly invaded, the people passing in at one opening, remaining in the hut to take stock of me, and



then passing out by the other opening. Of course I was a novelty, and everybody was apparently very eager to look at a white man. At last things got to such a pass that I found it was necessary to regulate the traffic—especially when a young woman had tried to thrust herself inside the already crowded hut. I could hear my orderly outside remonstrating with her. She replied, “I have come a long way on purpose to see the white man, and you shall not prevent my going in, for I mean to see him, and I intend to stop a good while that I may see him well, and tell those of my people who have not been able to come what he is like.” I then directed that the hut should be cleared, and that only women should be allowed to enter, and that they should be ranged up along the mud wall on both sides of the entrance. By this arrangement about eight on each side could be accommodated at a time. After they had stayed there sufficiently long to inspect me thoroughly, they retired and another batch came in. This kind of thing went on for the whole day; however, as their presence did not darken the hut, for they were kept from the doorway, I was able to continue my writing, which I did at a table in the centre, without particular inconvenience. As these good people were absolutely quiet, and I had got perfectly used to being public property and always on exhibition, it was soon no novelty for me and I was able to go about my duties inside the hut unconcernedly.

While I remained at the town, which I did for a few days, I was treated with the very greatest courtesy and kindness, and the people seemed to thoroughly appreciate my being amongst them. Kai Lundu, the chief, did not fail to pay his complimentary visits to me. One morning

when he came in he happened to be seated on a box next to a load on which was my tea-pot with cold tea in it. He suddenly noticed it and his curiosity was at once aroused ; he took it up and before I could stop him the spout of it had gone well into his mouth. I got it away and turned some of the tea into a tin cup for him ; but after tasting it, as there was neither milk nor sugar in it, it was not to be wondered at that he did not appreciate it, and he silently put down the cup.

He also had remarked a bright little silver whistle which I wore and which he had seen me blow. My watch lying on my small table attracted him ; he grasped it and getting it close to his mouth he blew at it with the force of a cyclone, but failed to produce any sound, much to his astonishment. The watch was rescued and happily had not suffered.

While taking a walk round the town I found a very nice clean-looking leather-worker's stall. Naturally the owner was a Mohammedan, because only Mohammedans work in leather ; at the time that I passed he was busily at work sitting upon his mat of bullock-hide.

These Mohammedans turn out some beautiful things in leather. Of course up-country, where nobody wears sandals but Mohammedans, except some few of the chiefs, there is not a great demand for such things. But these men are very clever in plaiting leather. The chiefs are extremely fond of carrying a whip in their hands or over their shoulders, with handles very elaborately and delicately plaited together. There is also a great demand for leather sebbes or gree-gree fetish charms ; on the whole leather workers find plenty of employment. They also combine with it the making of written fetishes, and

they are in every way accommodating, doing any kind of fetish work upon payment.

Passing on from the leather workers I came upon a barber who was intently occupied in scraping off the wool from the skull of a boy "pickin." At the moment of my seeing the operation one half of the child's skull was absolutely bald ; and as I left the barber had commenced to mow down the woolly growth upon the remainder of his head.

## CHAPTER XX

### THROUGH THE HINTERLAND

#### CHIEFS AND TREATIES—(*continued*)

THERE is a great variety in the style of wearing the wool even amongst the men and boys ; but when it comes to the women's heads the patterns displayed are exceedingly remarkable. I allude now to the ordinary hairdressing and not to the high coiffure which is usually only seen amongst the Bundu girls or chiefs' wives on special occasions. At the town of Morfindor about four miles from Kanre Lahun I came upon an extraordinary scene. The women, of whom there were a great number assembled in the barri, had got the wool on their heads arranged in the most wonderful manner. I noticed one had the wool closely cut two inches above the ears, extending in the form of a crescent from the forehead to the back of the head, the crown being a mass of long, heavily grown wool standing up in a number of little tumbled pod-like bunches ; others had the wool in pyramidal tufts two or three inches high all over the head.

I observed other women with the wool shaved off just above the forehead with a plaited edging to it, the

wool on the head being drawn in a crinkled condition to the centre of the crown, where the ends, assuming the form of a ball about three inches in diameter, stood up in bold relief.

It must be remembered that the native wool is not of that short curly description most people imagine it to be; for the wool of many of the women is quite three to four inches long, so that it is not difficult to tie it up into the shapes that I have described.

From the large town of Morfindor I went on to look at the Sulima, or Moia river, which was only about a mile and a half off, and which I had not seen since I left Banda-suma. I found that it was fully a hundred yards wide and that a ferry-canoe was plying to and fro.

At this point the river's course was about W.N.W. and E.S.E. The opposite side is the Gissi country. On my return to Morfindor I found that Chief Kai Lundu had come on. His singer was with him, who as usual amused himself by continually wiping the chief and myself down with the cow's tail, which he always carries, chanting his melodies during the operation. It rather palls upon one after a time; however, it is a great honour, so it has to be endured. By and by it occurred to me that I might with perfect propriety indulge in a pipe. I proceeded to fill one under the gaze of innumerable pairs of eyes; but when I struck a match to light it the surprise of the people was unbounded, such a piece of magic never having been seen before in the town. Their astonishment was perfectly reasonable, for whatever native fetish might be, certainly to see a white man take up a piece of timber, strike it on the side of a box and produce fire, must have appeared to them as a most extraordinary fetish. This

was amusing ; but our own great-grandfathers of the days of the tinder-box might have been as much astonished.

I have no doubt that the fame of that match travelled for a considerable distance. Followed by a great many people, the chief and myself left the town to return to Kanre Lahun. It was splendid to see Kai Lundu get into his hammock, which was simply a country cloth tied at both ends to a pole, in which he was closely covered over by coloured cloth. He was surrounded by a lot of his boys, who were all very fresh and in the best possible humour, and who raced along the path with him, all of them seeming exceedingly proud of their chief ; as well they might be. Men, women, girls, and boys all followed in the wake running, laughing, dancing, and joking as they went along under the beautiful tropical vegetation and brilliant sunshine. It was a delightful sight ; and to see so much happiness displayed by these people after their chief had so recently entered into a peace-treaty with the British Government, and when, I hoped, they were feeling that they were at last to be brought into contact with civilisation and looked after and cared for, was to me extremely gratifying, and more than counterbalanced the hardships and privations that I had undergone in reaching their country.

On getting to Kanre Lahun the native talent of the village blacksmith had to be requisitioned. It was necessary that his great ability should be employed.

A needle was required, for which I paid three leaves of tobacco, such a one as would enable my head carrier, who was a man of considerable resource, to struggle with the rubber sole of my boot, which had unfortunately become disengaged from the leather sole. This rubber sole was of

considerable thickness, and it is no easy matter under the most favourable circumstances for an amateur to pierce a rubber sole ; but when it is required to do so, as was the case in this instance, with a native-made needle, about three inches in length and proportionately thick, and of iron so soft that whenever the head-man succeeded with the greatest difficulty in pushing it through, half of the needle turned over and looked him in the face, and had to be straightened out before a second stitch could be made, it will be easily understood that the sewing of this sole was by no means either a short or simple operation. As a matter of fact I believe it took over three hours to do ; although I think it was only about an inch at the tip of the sole that required to be sewn. It was an opportunity not to be lost by my carriers of displaying their appreciation of their head-man's capabilities. They sat in a semi-circle in front of him, while at every successful stitch that he made the air resounded with their vociferous exclamations of delight ; and when he returned that boot to me his face beamed, and I must admit that I was much surprised, when I saw the extraordinary vagaries of the needle, that he had been able to accomplish the job at all.

It is the custom with the people in towns when they have anything to dispose of, to send a little child round notifying the townsfolk of the fact. This is done by one peculiar cry that never varies in any town throughout Mendi-land ; it is always the same intonation, the same sound, the same words, which are simply *Beh-leh*—"I have something to sell." The child moves about the town until somebody calls it by repeating the word and adding "*Wambeh*," which means "Seller, come here." The pickin thereupon approaches the hut from which this call emanates, and

bartering begins. Business may or may not result. It may be that the pickin has some small quantity of rice to exchange for palm-oil, native-grown tobacco, cassada, or any other thing. But this is only in regard to the domestic requirements of the town ; it is purely a local convenience, and is not to be considered in the light of trading ; for I have never seen anything disposed of in this way except small articles of consumption.

But the plaintive sound of this little itinerating bargainer, once heard, will always be remembered as each town is visited and the cry is heard again.

The up-country chiefs are not always able when meeting together to publicly incriminate those of their fellow-chiefs who may have surreptitiously broken faith with them, or, as it is called in the country, "Come out behind them."

When it was necessary to mention such a circumstance to me it had to be done in the strictest secrecy, as it would have been against country custom to have openly told this to me.

It was on one occasion necessary to give me certain information in connection with a particular chief who had "come out behind the others" after a decision had been arrived at. Kai Lundu therefore came to my hut in the middle of the night when all the people were sleeping (and when natives sleep it takes a great deal to rouse them), and there, with only my interpreter, he communicated what he had to tell me.

At several of the towns, it is difficult to find where a chief will sleep ; there seems to be a good deal of mystery about it ; for although a chief has got his own compound, he more frequently than not sleeps in different houses about the town for security.



From Kanre Lahun I proceeded further inland. After travelling for two hours and a quarter we crossed a stream which divided the Luawa country from that of Bombari, continuing through big bush, from which we emerged in about an hour, when there suddenly loomed up before us in the near distance a high mountain known as the Mamba ; an isolated peak which, standing out in bold relief against the surrounding country, naturally produces a very awe-inspiring effect that makes it an object of terror to the people, who believe it to be the dwelling place of a devil. I went somewhat out of my way on purpose to attempt the ascent of Mamba, but on arriving at a small fakai at the foot of the mountain I found that nothing would induce the people to cut a track for me through the dense bush ; nor could I get any information out of them except that a very bad devil lived there. They would not even accept the present that I hoped would procure me a little bit of the rock ; and they seemed uncommonly glad when I turned to depart without having aroused the anger of the local evil spirit.

The delights of mountaineering in the tropics can only be fully appreciated by those who have enjoyed them. There is no path or track of any kind ; your only chance is to scramble up the dry bed of what in the rains is a torrent, a rugged gully down the mountain side, three or four feet deep and blocked with boulders.

To get up this water-course is a difficult and exhausting operation, but the descent is infinitely worse ; and so strained do one's muscles become that one's legs shake violently, and it is impossible to steady them. The sensation is most peculiar. I used to wonder whether my legs would ever get right again ; however, upon reaching

the level ground this tottering always ceased immediately, and although I have had to experience it a great many times it does not appear to have left any bad effects. These Mendi-land mountains were invariably of whitey-grey quartz or dark grey granite, and generally covered with forests. Sometimes however they were as absolutely devoid of vegetation as a billiard ball, showing nothing but the bare rock, as in the case of the Bakka Vassa in Bande. The escarpments were usually very steep, and quite without any hold such as a European foot could take.

Beyond Mamba there was a range of mountains known as the Kati, stretching a considerable distance from east to west. What I have frequently noticed is the misleading calculations which one is very apt to make as to the height of a mountain when seen at a distance of a few miles. I do not think that the height of any mountains in this part of West Africa is over 4,000 feet above the sea level. At the distance of about five miles a high hill of 400 feet will often appear to be twice that elevation. When I first saw the Mamba I certainly was under the impression that it was 2,000 feet high, but upon coming, as I have said, right up to it, I was very much disappointed. Whether its isolation so contrasted with the surrounding vegetation as to cause this deception I cannot say, but the fact remains that one's eyesight in the computation of elevations in the tropics is not to be trusted. The tropical light may be responsible for this to me remarkable phenomenon. As regards photography, the behaviour of tropical light is certainly peculiar and requires special and distinctly local study. One would suppose that in taking a view in a good light the very shortest exposure would be more than sufficient even for ordinary plates; but my own ex-

perience is that this is not by any means the case. I find that at about nine o'clock in the morning or four o'clock in the afternoon, with my smallest diaphragm, an exposure of four or five seconds is not too long for the ordinary plates that I always use. I think it is of some importance to young travellers in West Africa to know this, because it is quite evident, I think, that great disappointment has been occasioned even to many men of experience, who have failed to give sufficient exposure, and who have omitted to stop down their lens to the fullest extent. I was shown in London some time ago a series of over one hundred interior views of important buildings in a distant country, which no doubt would have been of immense interest, the taking of which must have occupied much time and cost a great deal of money. The negatives were sent to England to a celebrated photographer, who very kindly showed some to me after their development. They were a total failure from want of sufficient exposure; only small patches coming out here and there. Now if this traveller went out expressly to obtain these views, his disappointment must indeed have been great.

This reminds me of a terrible loss I sustained myself through the capsizing of a canoe, which contained besides my kit two dozen undeveloped negatives of scenes in places in the far interior which will never be revisited by me. This happened when I was returning from the long tour to the Bunde country described in these pages. At the large town of Pujahun on the Upper Kittam, I was engaged in conversation with the chief, when to save time I deviated from my stereotyped rule of never allowing my loads to be crossed over water by canoe unless I was present; however, my head-man, who had always served

me faithfully and well, begged me not to worry, assuring me that he would not overload the canoe, which was only a small dug-out. I came up in a few minutes later to see my cases, boxes and belongings all floating upon the water. Some were in mid-stream, nothing sank fortunately, but how my Japan boxes did not do so has always remained a mystery to me to this day. My negatives, however, were irretrievably ruined, some of my instruments spoilt and rendered useless, and such things as could be reduced to a state of pulp were discovered in that condition, to my great dismay. After fishing all the packages from the river, the submerged dug-out was recovered and the water baled out. Later we succeeded in crossing over to the town of Yonni, where I was compelled to remain to dry my garments. It was fortunately a fine morning, with a powerful sun, and the display of my every article of clothing stuck about to dry was a sight that would scarcely have done credit to a fourth-rate laundry ground. Such a miscellaneous selection at once aroused an interest in the town-folk who were not slow to collect and gaze in sympathetic wonderment upon the white man's scattered belongings. The sun happily did not forsake us, it remained out sufficiently long to enable my garments to be dried ; but barely had my boys gathered them in when the rain came down in a deluge and continued during the evening and until daylight the next morning without intermission.

But my troubles were not yet finished, for a week later another mishap occurred when crossing some beautiful waterfalls near to the town of Fanima, on my way back to Sulima on the coast. The time was the beginning of June, when the rainy season was fairly setting in, and the cascade of water over the falls was running with great swift-

ness ; immediately beyond the cascade were numerous sunken and partially submerged rocky boulders of all shapes and sizes. By these we all had to pass over, stepping from one to another, the water swirling between them ; some of these boulders being covered by lichen were very slippery, and a foothold was sometimes difficult to obtain. The carriers, upon getting to the water's edge, took in the situation at once, and carefully arranging and securing their loads upon their heads, proceeded with great caution to step upon the nearest rocks. One by one they slowly crossed, but the man carrying a large square wooden box, in which my chronometer had been packed, was kept alongside of me until the last. I reminded him that this instrument was inside his load, he replied :

“ Yes, massa, I sabby dem clock, nutting no go do em ; I able for mind em good fashion ; I no go broke em, massa.”

“ All right,” I said, “ I shall trust you ; now get on.” The words were scarcely spoken when down he came upon the first boulder, the box which was on his head striking it with such force as to break ; but the boy clung desperately to one of the rope handles, so that while partially under the water the box was not lost. He was soon assisted to rise and his load taken by another ; fortunately the chronometer being at the top of the things did not get wet. It was thrown completely out of gear, but happily, having completed my astronomical observations I did not further require it on that tour.

It is accidents of this kind that make the work of a traveller so precarious, for of course mishaps may occur in an instant, through nobody's fault, which may seriously inconvenience him, and may entirely put an end to astro-





Fig. 61.—THE MAMBA MOUNTAIN, BOMBARI.

[To face page 207

nomical work upon these small expeditions when it is not usual to carry duplicate instruments.

I have, I fear, wandered some distance from the Mamba mountain; but I will now return to it. It will be remembered that the people of the fakai refused to approach it on account of the very bad devil said to live there. When this Mamba mountain first came into view the distance was about five miles, and the low ground of the vegetation round being exceedingly favourable, I at once photographed it, as shown in Figure 61; and then I went on for a further four miles when I came to the large town of Yandahu. The town was in mourning for the late chief, Bato, who had died shortly before. The country was in charge of Kai Lundu, who included it in the treaty that he had made with the British Government. I found that the women were going about the town with similar emblems of mourning to those I have already described, at the town of Juru, wearing the little grassy circlets upon their heads, and showing other signs of sorrow. The next morning I visited the Mamba as I have mentioned, and continued my march through very mountainous country. It seemed like a succession of ranges. We were incessantly going up one side and down the other. After travelling about six miles or so, upon getting to the summit of one of these elevations we came to the town of Dambaru, which was rather prettily laid out. The huts, coloured red, made a welcome change to the glare of the ordinary whitewash, and were not too close together; the ground also was of red laterite. The posts of the barri of this town, too, were mostly of camwood, which as I have already said is hard and red. Going on through all kinds of dense vegetation, with the ground so hilly, that I was unable to use any



description of hammock, I was compelled to walk all the distance. This coupled with the great heat made the journey exceedingly trying ; but we plodded on not knowing how far Bande-Wuru, the town of the paramount chief, was away from us. After marching for about four miles or more we came up to an orange tree growing evidently on an old site of what had once been some town or fakai. This tree was laden with fruit and came as a godsend. The oranges were not absolutely sweet, but they were full of juice and served to refresh the whole of my parched people. We immediately sat down under that tree while some of the boys gathered a lot of the fruit, wherewith we regaled ourselves. We got up refreshed, and proceeded, believing that we still had a long journey before us ; but we had scarcely gone on for five minutes when, upon turning a bend, a high hill was upon us, and right at the top was the town that we were making for.

We began the ascent and succeeded in reaching our destination, the town of Bande-Wuru ; but this last climb was to me so exhausting that I believe I could not have gone another fifty yards. The chief met me at the first fence and escorted me to my hut. I dropped down upon the mud bed and was too tired to get up for a couple of hours, by which time I had partially recovered. When I was able to get outside I found that around the hill upon which this town was built was a continuous valley ; and beyond the valley were high mountains, the place being literally encircled by them. In this town I found very good country cloths being made by a new description of loom, a vertical loom, at which the operator sat opposite to his work instead of sitting sideways as the people in the lower countries do. He also had a shaped shuttle with the

bobbin inside ; altogether it was a very superior and a far more business-like machine than I had hitherto met. All through the upper countries afterwards I noticed that this style prevailed. In our journey we had met as usual rubber vine in all forest-like places, and camwood of course was quite common. The chief said "that they only used camwood locally, and although the rubber was plentiful they did not understand the use of it. They planted beniseed and ground nuts to eat, also rice and cassada. Country cloths they made and carried to the Guma country to dispose of. Calabar beans were also abundant." The chief of Bande-Wuru, Sembe, was then a tall man of fine physique, about thirty-five years of age, with nice interesting features ; he seemed a very sensible man, as did also those about him. The next day, Chief Sembe having sent for his sub-chiefs, I held a meeting in his barri. The usual ceremonies were gone through, and the treaty with the British Government, after being carefully interpreted and understood, was duly signed. At the conclusion Chief Sembe received a small Government present, in the same way that all the other treaty chiefs had, in the shape of English cloth and American leaf tobacco. He afterwards made his own little offering of one country gown, nine fowls, a bushel of rice and a goat.

There were about 150 persons present, and the meeting lasted an hour and a half. We left the following morning.

After starting from Bande-Wuru, in ten minutes we came to a stream of water about 50 feet wide, locally called the Magor river. This was in the dry season in the month of February, when the water was very low, and all the carriers were able to wade across ; probably in the rains this would have been three times the width. We

continued on for three miles, when we came to the boundary mark between the Tungia and the Vassa country. After travelling ten miles and a half in all from the time we left Bande-Wuru, we reached the residential town of the paramount chief of the Vassa country, Fabanna, at Yandahu. By aneroid this town shows 650 feet higher than the town of Bande-Wuru. The whole of this journey although short had been terrible travelling. Some of the mountains were very precipitous; it seemed to be a series of scrambling up and down them for a great part of the way.

The very rude bush tracks were narrow cuttings and lanes, through vegetation so dense as to be almost impenetrable. Occasionally we were refreshed by the sight of running water over rocky beds and down the mountain sides. These of course were exceedingly beautiful, but the laboriousness of clambering over the mountains completely knocked all the sentiment out of me.

For a mile outside of Yandahu the pathway had been cleared a little, but even then the uphill work over rocky ground was very exhausting.

The hut that I stopped in was newly built, with only one coating of mudding on it; which, not being dry, made the place feel cold and damp. During the night there was heavy rain with much thunder and lightning, and the morning was quite cold and wretchedly dull—a wonderful contrast to the weather of the day before, which had been a typical African one; in fact this was the first rain of any consequence since I left Sulima two months earlier, and I was compelled to sit wrapped in my heavy ulster to keep myself at all warm. I observed a great difference in the people here at Yandahu, many of them had pleasant features and were tall and well grown.



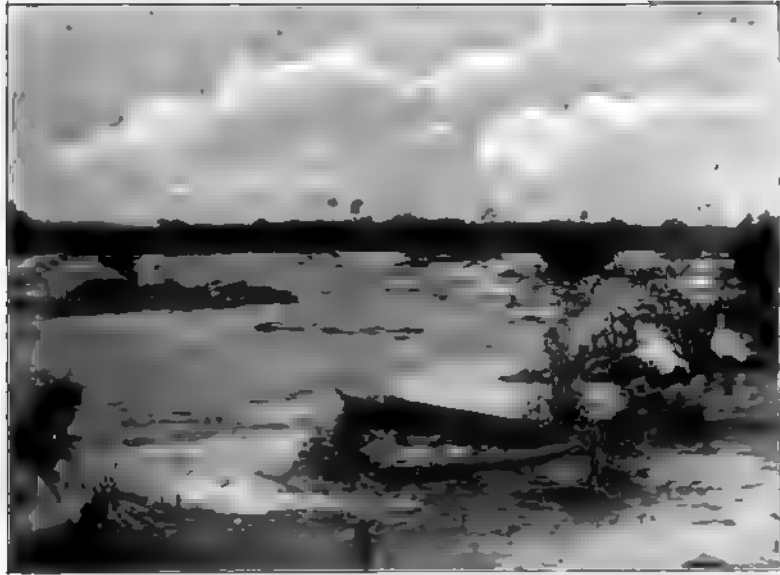


Fig. 62.—THE FALLS AT WEDARO SULIMA (MOJA) RIVER. (Page 167.)



*[To face page 211.]*

Fig. 63.—BUNDU GIRLS, VASSA COUNTRY.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THROUGH THE HINTERLAND

#### CHIEFS AND TREATIES—(*continued*)

WITH the end of the last chapter we had arrived in the Vassa country. A picture is here shown (Figure 63) of four Bundu girls photographed in Vassa, which is some seventy miles further inland from Juru. Upon referring to Figure 34 the difference in the style of hair-dressing in these two countries will be seen at a glance. The foundation of the coiffure is most elaborate plaiting, upon which is built up this extraordinary structure; here again we have the bunches of Bundu medicine seeds already mentioned. The prominent difference in the hair-dressing of this country is, that it is done up to present a full and broad front, extending from ear to ear, the high coiffure slanting back at a considerable angle. Three of these girls are wearing rope-like necklaces, which are made from very fine flexible cane bugles, dyed red with camwood and threaded. Earrings are worn; they are three pieces of a thin similarly dyed cane, forming a triangle. The forehead of the girl to the right of the picture is heavily dressed with the country wojeh, and each carries over her right shoulder many fetishes belonging to the Bundu order. It is a very

interesting group, thoroughly characteristic of this part of the country.

Great value is attached to this coiffure, and when the wearer is about her work it is carefully covered up with a thin cloth.

The chief of this Vassa country, Fabanna, while chatting with me in my hut one morning, produced a block of rock-salt which he said had come down from the Kormendi country some seven days' journey further inland, and he added that was what the people used up there with their food. This is the only piece of rock-salt that I have ever seen in the country, and it went to show that we were getting to the limit of distance to which imported salt was carried.

The same morning I held a large political meeting, at which there was an unusual amount of talking in regard to a treaty ; but when at length the chief and his sub-chiefs had clearly understood the purport of the proposed treaty, it was signed in the usual way. Afterwards the chief was most liberal in his complimentary offerings. He presented two bullocks, three fine new country gowns, and placed so much clean rice upon the ground that it made a most formidable pyramid.

He went on piling up the rice until I was at length obliged to beg him to be so good as to desist ; as there was so much then upon the ground that my people could neither consume it nor carry it away. He did so, and the meeting terminated. The larger portion of the rice I presented to the town people, which greatly delighted them. One bullock was killed, half of which, as was my custom, I returned to the chief, and as everybody had a sufficiency of food for the time being, the place was *en fête*,



*(To face page 212.)*

7 Fig. 64.—FARANNA, PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF THE VASSA COUNTRY.





processions of singing and dancing parties parading the town, which appeared to have a very great many people in it, who had arrived from all around. Leaving the one bullock at the town for my return journey, I started from Yandahu the next morning for the Bande country. We retraced our steps over the path by which we had arrived for about two miles when we struck what was called the main road to the interior *viâ* Bande. The vegetation was constantly varying ; sometimes scrub, then tall forests; again shrubberies running off into low grass ; while the ground was generally hilly. We again crossed the Magor river, but here it had sensibly diminished, and was only about twenty feet broad, and easily forded. On the other side we got into tall cane brakes for some little distance which afforded no shade ; and by and by we crossed a mountain gorge by a very steep escarpment. Scrambling up the other side, in a few minutes we came upon clusters of banana plants and kola trees, the usual signs that a town was near.

Passing them we entered the large fakai of Yoe Pahun. As we had as yet only travelled seven miles and a half, I merely remained a few minutes to enable me to look round, when we again started and plunged at once into a tall forest. Emerging from it we ran into high reeds and mixed vegetation, and presently came upon the fakai of Dangbahun, which here we found was two miles from the last fakai.

The weaving of country cloths was going on. It was now three o'clock, and from the accounts that we had received as to the distance of Popalahun, to which we were bound, we imagined that we still had a long way to go ; so we passed on. Fortunately the ground was fairly

level, as we were working along the valleys ; and although the timber about was very large, the pathway was greatly improved, and the travelling in consequence was not nearly so laborious. In thirty-five minutes we had arrived at Foku Lahun, a small town where the vertical loom was in use. I allowed only a halt of ten minutes, just enough to let me look at the place, as it was my invariable rule never to pass through a town without overhauling it to see whether there were any persons "in stock."

A word to show what "to stock" means. "Stocking" is detaining a person in the following way. About four or five feet of the stem of a tree is taken. A hole is cut in the centre, and the foot of the person to be detained is put through. As he could not move without assistance a vine is attached to both ends of the block, and when he wants to move he puts this rope over one shoulder, where the weight rests, and so he can hobble a few paces. "Stocking" was a very common practice, and I was frequently enabled to obtain the release of persons so stocked, or, if there was undue cruelty, to release them myself.

The journey was resumed through tall reeds to a gully track running through a heavily timbered forest. Later on we struck a good pathway, which continued until we reached Popalahun, the town we were making for, which we did in thirty-five minutes.

By the sides of this pathway were a profusion of pineapple plants that were simply a mass of fruit. Unfortunately it was not quite ripe, so that I and my boys could do no more than pass it with an unsatisfied longing. We approached the town through a little home-like grass land, which was very picturesque, and which I greatly appre-

ciated ; in fact, for the moment it took one away from Africa to one's own country. We then entered the large town of Popalahun, after having done that day a sixteen miles' journey.

Of course it is necessary in going into these places to have a pilot, who is provided by the chief. The pilot who accompanied us from Yandahu to this town rejoiced in the name of Toko. He was a man of superior intelligence, with pleasing features, and evidently took some pride in the duties with which he was entrusted. Although rather short of stature, he made an effective figure as he walked along under the forest trees clothed in a parti-coloured country gown of native dyes, which doubtless had been lent to him by the chief for this special occasion. Over his shoulder was suspended a sword in a country-made scabbard, while in his right hand he carried a long red flint-lock gun, which was as tall as himself. A gree-gree charm made of crocodile skin hung from his neck, and upon his head he wore a curious country cloth cap in blue and white stripes, with a deep fringe hanging carelessly over the forehead.

One of the most interesting things that I saw in this Vassa country was an ordinary native market ; and I think I shall be able to show that these up-country people are not at all in the wretched condition often pictured by the European imagination ; on the contrary they have little difficulty in obtaining most of the necessaries that their simple mode of living demands, besides many other things that to them are luxuries. I have not heard of these country markets in localities that can be supplied from the Coast ; the nearest being at Bai-wara, beyond Mando about 150 miles inland. The markets, which are of weekly

recurrence, are always held in the open under large trees. The one I have just referred to in Vassa was held under gigantic trees, and there must have been close upon 500 people there. From the list of articles offered for barter, which I now enumerate, it will, I think, be seen that these Hinterland folks are practically independent of Coast supplies. The articles included country-grown cotton in the raw state ; cloth in long lengths about five inches wide as from the loom ; spun cotton thread wound on spindles ; country cloths made up ; indigo-dyed threads in skeins ; dried indigo leaves for dyeing ; dried country-grown tobacco leaves ; palm kernels, palm oil, palm kernel oil, country-made iron, clean rice, rough rice or paddy, ground nuts, kus-kus, guinea corn, bananas, pumpkins, jakatus (a kind of bitter tomato), boiled sweet potatoes, dried okra, cassada, fowls, dried flying ants, dried rats on skewers, dried fish, good country-made mats, native pottery (chiefly bowls in large quantities), a few cattle, sheep and goats, and a small quantity of salt and gunpowder ; the two latter being the only imported articles.

The chief currency was iron in long strips, in shape something like a tee square with a narrow twisted end, one strip of which I concluded to be equivalent to a penny. Salt was much valued ; but everything passed in barter. In the bush I met several native women who were going to this market, with their purses under their arms, in the shape of a mat, containing perhaps a couple of dozen of these pieces of iron. It is curious to notice the way that salt is carried great distances through the country. It is originally imported in bags, but is repacked into cylindrical bundles of palm leaf about three feet long by three inches in diameter, each containing some seven pounds of



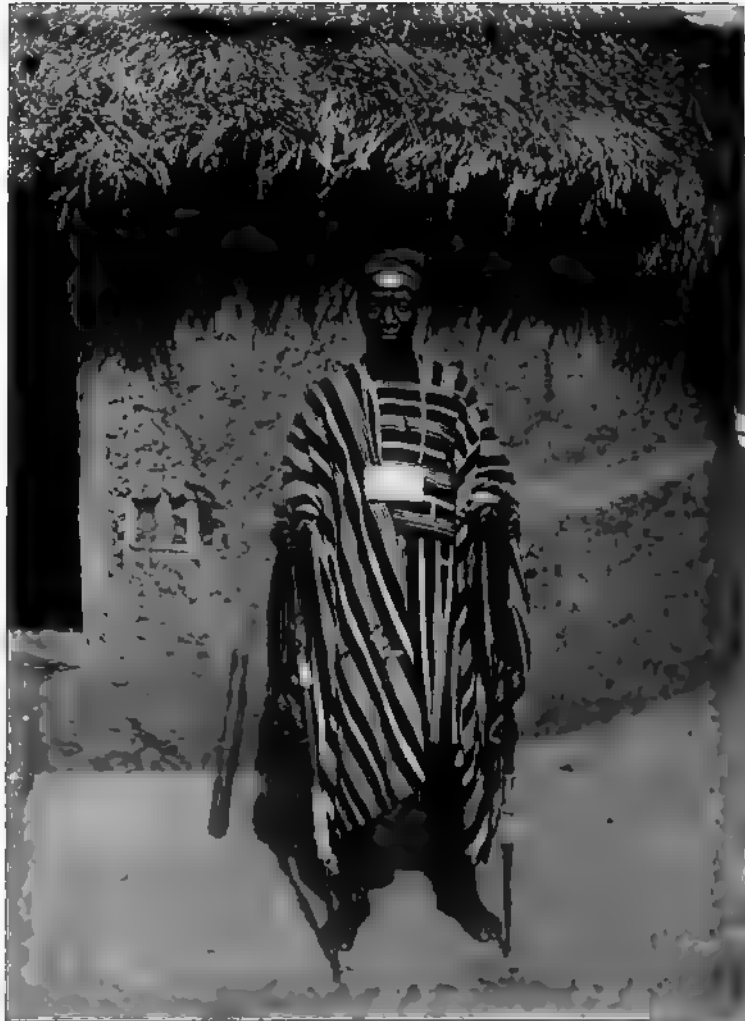


Fig. 65. A YOUNG UPPER MENDI CHIEF *(To face page 21.)*

salt, the value for one package being twenty irons, equal to 1s. 8*d.* in English money.

The iron when made up into spear heads and knives is beautifully bright, having more the appearance of nickel than of iron, and retaining its brightness. When used in connection with certain musical instruments it gives out a rich and pleasant tone. On one occasion in an interview with a young chief he said that, although they made country cloths and palm oil, and planted tobacco and rice, they carried no trade down to the sea ; but they exchanged their produce for iron and cattle. When he had collected two hundred pieces of iron or seven country cloths, he bought a slave. A man, woman or child were all considered as one head of money. The slaves worked his farm or they could be given to the chiefs in payment for their daughters, who became by country custom the wives of the purchaser.

This particular chief being a young man had then only eight wives, but hoped speedily to add to the number, as the status and social position of a chief was gauged by the number of his wives. I have known some chiefs with so many that they did not remember them when they casually met and were spoken to by them ; it was no uncommon thing for a chief when visiting me to have twenty to thirty wives amongst his retinue.

At the same time I know of at least one occasion when a chief was not altogether pleased at having to add to the number of his wives. In the lower country I once entered a town, and upon the chief coming to meet me I saw that he appeared to be in a state of uneasiness. I said to him :

“ What is the matter ? You do not appear to be in your usual spirits.” His reply was a strange one ; it was simply :



“If nar one it better—but nar four.” I said, “I really don’t understand what you mean; you must explain.” Then in a roundabout way he informed me that his fame as a big chief had extended to the chief of a place some distance away inland, who had several marriageable daughters. This chief was personally unknown to him, but he had come down two days previously with four of his daughters, not only to introduce himself, but to present these four girls as wives, and it was this which had perplexed this chief and given rise to the remark which he had made.

“Well,” I said, “how will that affect you? You have already got a large number of wives; four more or less can make no difference.”

“Yes,” he replied, “but them women sabbi eat plenty rice.” I expressed my wish to see them, and went into the barri. Presently they appeared with their father. They were comely girls, and at once commenced to sing and dance, which so elated their father that when they had finished he treated me to a *pas seul* on his own account. After my making them some little present they retired in the same decorous way in which they had come in, and I saw no more of them, as I left the next day; at which time the chief had not decided whether he would accept them. I am however of opinion that by country custom he could not well refuse to do so. This is the only case of the kind that I ever heard of, and probably had this chief not been a Mohammedan it would not have occurred.

From Popolahun I continued towards Kolahun, the residential town of the paramount chief of the Bande country; but there were still five miles to do of Vassa before entering the Bande country. After travelling for

an hour we reached the large town of Kolahun ; but upon getting up there the slab gates were so exceedingly low and narrow that it was impossible to get my loads through until the gates had been removed from the lintels and some of the side posts cut away, which caused a good deal of delay. These towns on the main road have, as I have already mentioned, impenetrable bush at the sides of their approaches. It is consequently impossible to work round the town. Every person must therefore of necessity pass through if he is to continue his journey ; which will show how completely a main road can be blocked in time of war, and also how difficult it is for a slave to escape. He would certainly be stopped at one of the towns, for no stranger can be in any town without its being known and reported to the chief.

Twenty minutes were occupied in passing the loads into the town and getting them through the opposite gate, which had to be served in the same way as the first. I may here mention that nearly at all the places we subsequently passed through this same difficulty had to be encountered.

Proceeding for a further nine miles and a half we arrived about 12 o'clock at Hanjahun, which was an interesting place, as I there saw for the first time clay pipes being made. I noticed that the operator took a small block of clay about the size required for the bowl of a pipe ; the only implements used were a small country-made knife, very sharp, a thin strip of palm cane and his fingers. The thumb of his right hand he pressed into the clay to make the interior of the bowl. He rolled it over and over upon his bare leg until the proper thickness was obtained and patted it until he had got the required shape, the rim

being trimmed with his sharp knife. He then made a hole in the bottom of it to receive the stem, which he formed separately by twining a strip of clay round a thin stick of palm cane, rolling, scraping and patting it, until the required thickness was obtained. This stem he cut to the proper length, stuck it into the bowl, and the pipe was finished with the exception of firing; the making of the pipe itself not having taken more than two minutes and its shape being perfect. Before firing the pipe is well sun-dried. It is then placed in an earthen pot having holes in it, which is covered over by another pot, fire being made underneath. The baking takes a whole day.

In coming to this town we had passed oil-palms again and had seen various patches of native tobacco. The chief informed me that they made palm oil and palm kernel oil, but only for local consumption. They grew rice and made country cloths, and had the rubber vine in the bush, but did not know that it was of any use.

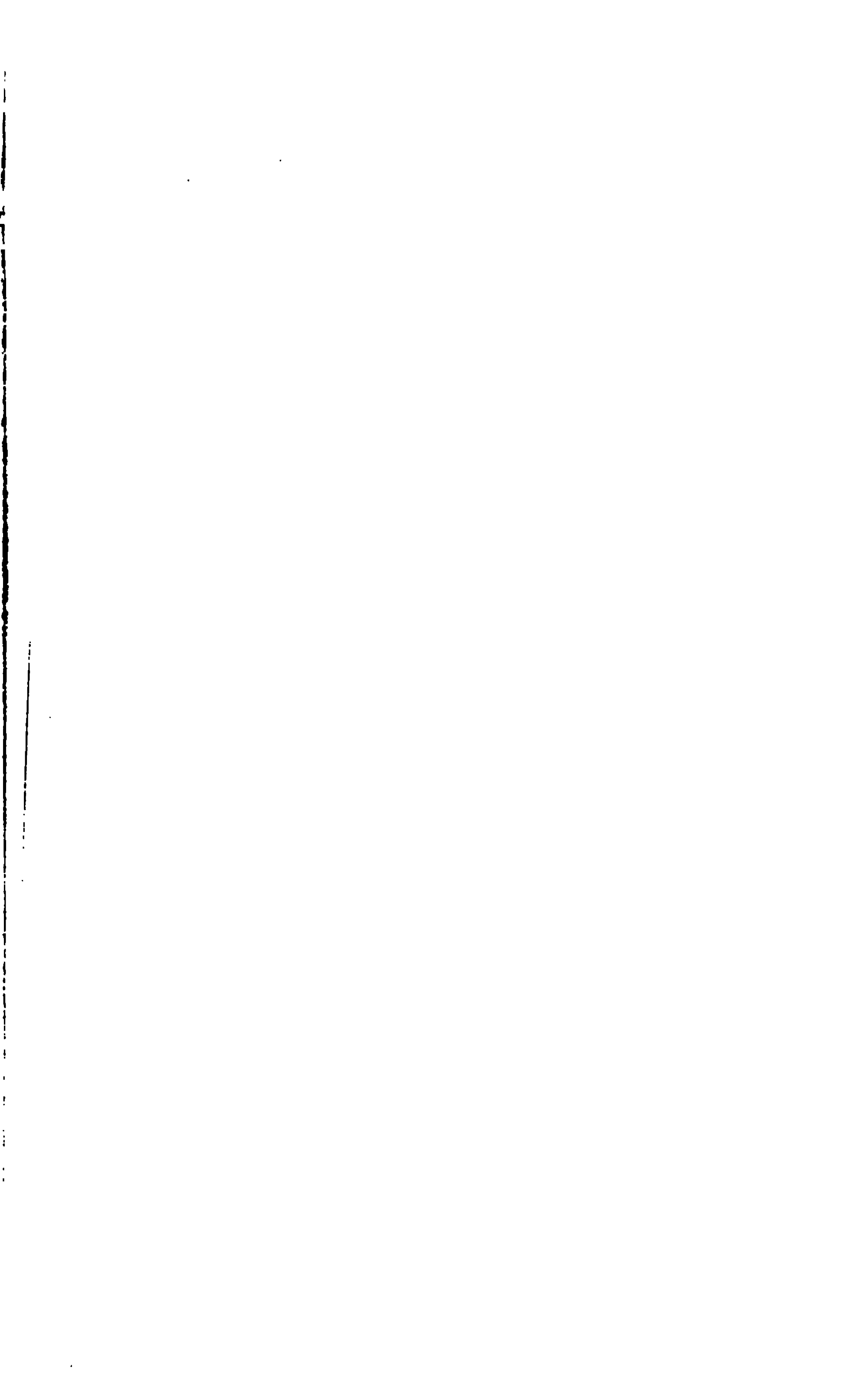
The heat coming along had been very great. Just outside this town one of my boys came running up alongside my hammock and handed to me a very extraordinary flower which he had just picked in the bush. It was hanging low down and I had passed without noticing it.

As I had no means of preserving it I thought the best way to obtain a representation would be to photograph it as soon as the town was reached, which I did.

The entire length of this flower, as shown in Figure 66, was about sixteen inches, across the lower lobe about ten inches, and the length of the constricted narrow end was eight inches, so it can readily be conceived what a gigantic flower it was. The surface was crinkled with coarse veins running over it, and was of a dark purple



Fig. 66.—ARISTOLOCHIA GOIDEANA, FOUND IN THE VASSA COUNTRY, WEST COAST OF AFRICA.



colour. By the courtesy of the Director of the Royal Gardens, Kew, I have been informed that this species was discovered by the Rev. R. C. Thomson in 1863, near to the mouth of the old Calabar River, West Coast of Africa, and at the request of Mr. Thomson it was named *Aristolochia Goldieana*, after the late Mr. Goldie, a co-worker in the mission field. It is in cultivation at Kew, where it flowers annually about June in a tropical house. The root stock is tuberous, and the stems annual.

We passed through a great deal of low vegetation, which gave no shelter whatever, and as the country was very undulating and hilly the people felt the heat considerably, and so did I. When at Hanjahun we saw in the near distance a mountain which appeared to have very little vegetation upon it. The chief informed me it was known as the Bakka Vassa mountain, and stated that it would be necessary for us to go over it, but that it would be quite useless for the attempt to be made just then, as the heat was too intense ; the mountain being of bare granite the surface would be too hot, he said, for the carriers to walk upon. We therefore waited for a time, and upon our ultimately leaving and getting out of the town we descended a steep declivity to a swamp in the valley at the base, and thence under a broiling sun toiled up by a long gradient with no vegetation to afford the slightest shade. But going up that long gradient with the thermometer registering 140° was too much even for my carriers.

They could not walk ; they just managed to get along by performing all sorts of antics to keep their feet off the burning rock, running and hopping alternately. But there was no turning back ; we were obliged to go on, and after some time we gained the summit, which fortunately was

cooler. From this summit I obtained the finest views I have ever had of the Bande country, which appeared to be nothing but a mass of irregular hills covered with a dense low vegetation with a high mountainous background, towns being dotted about here and there both on the hill-tops and in the valleys as far as the eye could see.

The descent was by a steep escarpment, not only exceedingly dangerous, but absolutely devoid of any vegetation whatever ; the mountain being of dark gray granite it was impossible to get any foothold, as the surface was absolutely smooth, without any ridge or projection.

Fortunately I invariably have attached to my field boots a thick rubber sole for use over this kind of mountain. This enables my feet to get a firm grip without slipping, as would be the case were the sole of leather. By planting one of my sure-footed carriers in front of me and grasping his jumper at the back of his neck, with great caution I was just able to keep myself in a vertical position and move along slowly. Had he made a false step and fallen, nothing could have prevented my rolling over and over, as gracefully as circumstances would have permitted, until I reached the distant level.

Happily I was spared this humiliating display. It appears to me that natives are something like the wild goats in their agility, for they seem to think nothing of these difficult descents even with loads on their heads.

About five miles from this mountain is Kolahun, the residential town of the paramount chief, which we reached at 4.20, and as there was very little shade and the country was hilly all over, it was altogether a very exhausting journey. The chief received me very nicely, but the people seemed afraid to approach, although they

stood around gazing at me. I had to remain at this town for five days. On the third day I found so many people were coming into the town to see the white man, that, my hut being a very dark one, I had a little shed erected at the back of it, which was on a large open Korbangi.

This shed consisted of six posts stuck in the ground and cane rafters covered over with the country mats and leaves. I had my hammock slung up in it, and by this means I was not only enabled to get on with my work in comfort but great numbers of people could sit down on the ground and gaze at me to their hearts' content. I saw some very curious dances here, the like of which I had never seen before in any part of the country; one was called the Santelule and was a *pas seul* performed by a Bande woman.

Her get-up was most extraordinary. The high head-dress was composed of a heap of skulls and beaks of hornbills mixed with the jaw-bones of some small animals, and her waist was festooned with bones, bits of shell and a collection of similar things. The costume was by no means pleasing; she however sang and danced about vigorously, which seemed to highly amuse the people.

There was another dance called the Korsembe or devil dance. This was really a clever performance. This devil had on a cumbersome long fibrous costume and on his head he wore a coloured wooden mask which was surmounted by feathers. The grassy costume about the body was very neatly trimmed; he wore wide trousers, also made of this grass, which were really beautifully made, for I should imagine it was no easy matter in a country where trousers are unknown to get a good cut in this fibre, but



they were exceedingly well put together, and I find upon reference to my diary that I made a note at the time that they looked very well. None of his flesh was visible. Of course in this costume he looked a big and bulky figure; but he seemed to grow enormous when by some means or other he shot up this costume from the body, raising it to a height of about nine feet. What struck me about this was that, although he did so, there was no break in the fibrous dress. Notwithstanding his cumbrous costume he did some capital dancing, and turned head over heels repeatedly, very cleverly, and it was one of the best country performances that I have been at.

About the town a good many of the men were wearing a copper ring on the big toe, and the women were wearing a thin stick about three or four inches long stuck through the lobe of the ear.

Mendi language had practically ceased to be heard here; it had given place to Bandi and Bundi. The next day, when the meeting was to be held at which the treaty was to be brought forward, the town was full of people from all parts who had come in to see and to hear what was taking place. For some time before the hour arranged for the meeting the place was turned into a kind of pandemonium; the noise of the tom-toms and the hubbub of the people was simply deafening. Around me in my improvised shed were some hundreds of men and women, and the devil of the day before again came out to amuse them, attended by his four satellites. He seemed on this occasion to be even more full of energy than he was before; so much so that he feigned to be exhausted and frequently had to lie at full length on the ground. When in that position his appearance

was extraordinary and his proportions were elephantine ; it required all the assistance of his satellites to revive him. One fanned him with a large palm-cane tray with a deep fringe of dried grass ; another carried a long hand-broom made of thin strips of palm-cane, all bound together at the handle, with which he continually brushed down the devil ; another standing by blew a small horn at intervals ; a fourth carried a calabash of water which he sprinkled over the ground with a bunch of leaves. With these attentions the devil came to and was enabled to rise and continue the performance.

The political meeting took place during the afternoon ; the usual ceremonies were gone through, and the treaty was signed. The chief stated that while I had been at the town the Sofa war from the town of Pandeme in the Bunde country—had “pulled a town” of his near by. This war he said was being made by the three chiefs Kikora, Jasa, and Sosor, and that Bunde and Kormendi were combining to bring down the war. I informed him of my intention to proceed on to the town of Pandeme to endeavour to get the paramount chief there to sign a similar peace-treaty to his own and that of the other chiefs. He said that I should meet Sosor at Pandeme, as he and his war-boys were sitting down there.

The next day there was a market, which was held outside the town of Kabawana, about three miles away. On this occasion there must have been nearly a thousand people present. The market was held under a gigantic banyan tree, the only banyan that I have ever met. Everything that I described at the former market of Popolahun could apparently be procured here ; but I noticed rather a brisk trade doing in gunpowder, which I had not observed

before. I could hear a great din some distance away as I approached the market; but when I reached the scene everything appeared to be conducted in a most orderly manner.

It was not known by the people that I was going to attend this market, and their surprise upon seeing a white man suddenly burst upon them for the first time can be more readily imagined than described. The brisk trade of which I just caught a glimpse immediately ceased, and I became the object of universal attention. Crowds followed me about as I tried to make my way through the people and among the wares that were spread all over the ground. On my return to the town of Kolahun I found that an important sub-chief named Hama, from Falahun, who had not been present at the meeting, had arrived. As he was so important a personage I held an informal meeting of chiefs to explain to him what had been done as regards signing the treaty with the paramount chief, with which he was perfectly satisfied. Afterwards he presented a bullock and a quantity of clean rice; the paramount chief having at the previous meeting also made similar offerings. The chiefs and people expressed their great delight at my coming amongst them and hoped that I should be able to maintain peace throughout the country.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THROUGH THE HINTERLAND

#### CHIEFS AND TREATIES—(*continued*)

I HAD now to penetrate the land of the warlike Sofas, whose name was a terror to all the tribes. Upon leaving Kolahun I proceeded to this Sofa country, which is now beyond our sphere of influence. The residence of the paramount chief was at the great war town of Pandeme, the most notorious place in the whole upper country. The last twenty miles of the journey was about as bad a bit of travelling as one could well encounter. The country throughout was hilly, much of it being bare granite, with ranges of forest-covered mountains in all directions. In this march we had to cut our way through a general combination of all the impediments we had hitherto met, and all our difficulties were greatly increased. The network of entangled creepers and vines swooping down from the tall trees in the primeval forest gave us a great deal of trouble. The country was thoroughly wild, with bad quagmires, swamps, confused morasses and jungles of palms and tall cane-brakes, which completely enveloped my men with their loads and me in my hammock. Sometimes we had to descend gorges of considerable depth,

where, at the narrow bottom, we found running water with lichen-covered boulders. The effect as we looked along the deep narrow vista was weird and strange in the extreme, and the place so cold and dark that it chilled one to the marrow. The other side of the gorge had then to be ascended by a sharp escarpment, when we again pursued our way amidst gigantic forest trees.

The only beautiful sight I met in the whole of this distance was the Mawir water, a stream about fifty feet in width, which swirled madly round the confused masses of huge boulders through the gloom of a tall virgin forest ; the darkness and chilliness of which same forest and its death-like stillness, unbroken save for the rushing of the Mawir, produced an unearthly effect altogether indescribable. From this dark forest, which took us some hours to get through, we emerged, quite suddenly and without the slightest warning, to find ourselves in an open country of what had once been rice farms but were now overgrown wildernesses. In a few minutes we came to a tumble-down shed, and while resting there some war-boys approached. I must state that in this country the Mendi language had ceased to be heard, and therefore two days previously, when passing through the Bandi country, I had engaged the services of a chief who could speak Mendi, Bandi and Bunde ; not one of my own party being able to speak or understand either of the last two languages.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when I arrived at that tumble-down shed. The morning of the same day, about eleven o'clock, I had been met in a jungle by a messenger from the chief of Bandi, who had informed me that the chief had heard of my coming, and requested that I would be good enough to turn back and not proceed

to his town. I desired the messenger to return, and to inform the chief that as I was entirely upon a peace mission and the emissary of the Government I could not possibly comply with his request, and that I should certainly proceed. I immediately did so, and arrived in the afternoon at the shed in the rice wilderness which I have just mentioned. The head war-boy came forward, and through the Bandi interpreter inquired respectfully for what purpose I had come into the country, and put various other questions, concluding by asking me to remain there for the night while he sent on to the chief at the town of Pandeme five miles away, to inform him that I was anxious to have an interview with him.

My hammock was then slung up in the shed, and my carriers proceeded to cut down the shrubs and high grass round about for protection against snakes, and to clear a space for themselves for their fires. They were very soon busily engaged in cooking their food ; after eating which they spread their mats on the ground, enveloped themselves in their country cloths and were quickly asleep. I did not sleep much myself that night, not feeling at all certain what might transpire later. We were up early in the morning awaiting the arrival of the messengers, who did not turn up until about ten o'clock. Shortly before this I proceeded to take sights to astronomically locate my position ; and I afterwards ascertained that my using my sextant had created some fetish fear amongst those war-boys who had remained concealed, that I was talking to the sun, and that I was about to bring some very bad fetish medicine into the town. However, when the messengers, one of whom was riding on a wiry little horse, did come, they desired that first of all some of my people

should eat country fetish. This I would not allow ; but the Bandi interpreter being perfectly willing to pass through the ordeal I did not oppose it, and he went through with it. Afterwards I was informed that the chief desired that I would continue my journey to his town, and we all went on together along a nice level road until we arrived at the entrance of Pandeme.

This town was at the base of a lofty range of mountains, and surrounded by forest trees, so that only a very few of the roofs of the huts were visible from the outside. I saw at a glance that there were many war-fences. I passed through the first fence, and then found that we were in a small enclosure running between that and the next fence, and there I was requested to wait with my people while the chief consulted with his sub-chiefs and head men. During that time various natives walked through this enclosure for the purpose, evidently, of taking stock of us. By and by I was requested to enter the town, and after passing through nine other similar enclosures, the narrow spur gates of any one of which could have been shut and the whole of us entrapped, I came upon a very large town with great numbers of people, and some of the most cut-throat looking war-boys that I had ever seen. I sat in the great quadrangle of the town for a short time, when a messenger came from the chief desiring me to select such houses as I required for my accommodation. This was soon done, and the houses occupied. During the afternoon the chief sent repeated messages to say that he was coming ; but it was not until past five that a messenger arrived to tell me that he was in the quadrangle waiting to receive me. Upon my going out I found him surrounded by many of his head people

and armed war-boys in the centre of the town. I could not prevail upon him to sit by me or upon anything I provided ; but one of his people, who carried a quaintly-shaped wooden stool, placed it opposite to me at about ten yards distance, and upon this the chief sat. After a short talk he presented a white country cloth to show " his heart was clean " towards me, together with a black fowl and some kola nuts, all emblems of friendship, and I arranged for a public meeting in the barri, or native court-house, for the following morning.

This meeting took place in the presence of a great number of people. It lasted from 9.30 to 11.30. Pandeme was already engaged in a war in the Liberian Hinterland, distant three days' walk.

The chief of Pandeme was Sosor. When I brought forward the subject of the peace treaty with the British Government it was evidently distasteful to him, although he did not say so directly. He said that their great war-man for Bunde, Buse, and Kormendi was away at the seat of war, and that it was useless for any chief to say that there should be no war in the country without his consent. How true this was it was impossible for me to know ; but it was quite apparent that every obstacle was being put in the way. No treaty was made, which was perhaps just as well, for on the subsequent delimitation of boundary the Bunde country was placed outside of British territory.

I found the people of Pandeme quite different from any I had ever met before. They are Sofas, and entirely a war people. They told me they knew nothing but warring ; they live by warring, and will fight for any one who will pay them well for their services. They seemed altogether a wild lot, and evidently knew nothing of white



people. They were not at all disposed to fraternise with my escort of police or with my boys, all of whom, although black, were as great strangers to them as I was myself; for not one of them, as I have already said, could speak a word of the Bundi language. In fact as regards language, we were all at the mercy of our Bandi guide and interpreter.

I noticed a very striking difference in the tattooing of the people. In the lower districts there had been a white or coloured clay dressing on the face of the women, but up here in Bundi all the markings were in a jet black, produced by a mixture of two vegetable dyes found in the neighbourhood. These jet-black markings on their dark brown faces produced a peculiarly barbaric effect. Occasionally there might be seen a child wearing a few beads, but beyond these beads and the guns and powder the war-boys carried, probably obtained through the Liberian country, no imported article was to be found in Pandeme. All cloth was of country manufacture. On my wanting some fowls, and offering to exchange some American leaf tobacco for them, the people looked at it, sniffed at it, and asked what it was. It was evidently unknown to them in this form, although native tobacco in small patches was in cultivation outside the town. We had met on the route, as usual, rubber vines in the forests, and even at this distance from the coast we found the oil-palms still numerous and flourishing, but owing to want of transport of no commercial utility; and only sufficient oil was made for the local wants of the people. On our journey up to Pandeme we frequently walked over tracts of ground covered with uncracked palm-nuts which had fallen from the trees, and were rotting.

After the meeting held at Pandeme the Bandi interpreter informed me that he thought it was probable an attack would be made upon us, as the people had never seen before so many loads as I carried. Things did not seem at all pleasant in the town, so I warned my people to be extremely cautious and to avoid doing anything likely to create a disturbance. In the evening while the chief was with me in my hut, my cook rushed in saying that he was prevented going into his house by war-boys standing in front with drawn swords. The chief went to see what was the matter ; when he returned he said that a mistake had been made,—that the men had not got drawn swords. However, I informed the chief that as he was unable to sign the treaty I should leave in the morning ; and I was compelled to sit up the whole night with loaded arms in front of me, not knowing what might happen at any moment. Pandeme was the limit of this tour.

In the morning the things were packed and we got ready to start on the return journey. I inquired for the chief, in order that I might say good-bye to him, as was customary ; but I was told that I should find him at the first fence, where he was waiting to receive me. I thereupon formed up the men with their loads, marching them in front, and brought up the rear with my few police. When we got through the nine fences and reached the tenth, I saw no chief there, but some treacherous looking war-boys, who stated that the chief had gone upon the road in advance of me. All this looked very bad and betokened trouble, to add to which my Bandi interpreter was presently missing. Upon getting outside and wading through some water to a slight elevation opposite, I saw a number of armed war-boys located on two rising mounds between

mountainous character, the road-ways were a great improvement upon those we had passed over in going to Pandeme.

The chief of this town had got a little country palaver on hand at a town that I should be passing through, so he told me he would be very glad if I would settle it.

I relate what the palaver was, to show the style of palaver that the chiefs are called upon to adjudicate.

A sub-chief had seized two wives belonging to another sub-chief, and three wives belonging to a third sub-chief; and the slaves of one of these sub-chiefs had run away to the man who had seized all the wives, who refused to give the slaves back.

After the seizure of the five wives, one of the Kolahun people was coming up with fifty-three bundles of salt, two boys and three cutlasses, but the same chief who had seized the wives and detained the slaves now annexed all these other things, saying he did so because one of these sub-chiefs had taken two of his wives.

The whole thing appeared a muddle, but I ultimately succeeded in clearing up a good deal of it and getting reparation made.

From this town I proposed to work back to Kanre Lahun by way of the lower Gisi country. I retraced a part of the road that we had gone over in getting to Kolahun for twelve miles and a half to the town of Porubu. Remaining there for one clear day I again left and went to parts of the Luakorle and Tingia countries, until after four days I got back to chief Kai Lundu's town, the distance between the two places being fifty-six miles and a half. Leaving Kanre Lahun I travelled back to the town of Baiema in the Mando country, a distance of thirty

miles, where I met the paramount chief Kabba Seh, who wished me to visit his own residential town of Garahun, which was seven miles and a half to the south-east, in the hope that I should see the chiefs of the Malema country which was not far distant from the upper Mano river, as he thought that some of them were making war upon the Gola people on the other side of that river. I started off at 8.15 in the morning by a good road which was, however, furrowed by a gully track running along it, leading into ferneries and on through a cool glade, which brought us into the small town of Tavi. Pushing on through swamps and more exquisite ferneries we came to the large town of Jarra. Many persons were about, and as these persons had not previously been visited by a white man, I remained there for ten minutes, sitting in a conspicuous part of the town in order that they might have a good view of the latest novelty. I was very soon surrounded by the townsfolk who seemed by their gestures and hilarity to have formed a favourable opinion. Getting away from Jarra by an excellent road through open glades between tall trees and ferneries we came to chief Kabba Seh's town of Garahun.

Garahun is one of the best towns I have been in ; it was far better laid out than usual, with a large and wide quadrangle. The mud hut I occupied was at one end of the town ; it was spacious and parallelogram in form, with a private yard attached to it containing an open shed-kitchen, so clean that it was quite a treat to look at it. Towards the end of the afternoon I took a saunter round the town and found plenty of work going on, such as the making of pottery, cane mats, and the weaving of country cloths. I remained at this town the next day, which

was Sunday ; and the following morning at a quarter to seven started off for the Malema country. As this was by a cross road we knew it would prove a long day's journey. Every variety of vegetation was gone through with the usual number of swamps, jungles and forests. After going on for an hour and a half we arrived at the large town of Gahun.

There were a good many people about, and amongst them I noticed an elderly man of good physique, well chiselled features and a long grey beard ; altogether he seemed of a very superior caste. He had a lot of his people with him, and they were all quartered in one part of the town. From his appearance I imagined that he and his people were strangers, so I inquired from the chief of the town, who and what he was, and where he had come from. The chief informed me that he was a Beli, or Beri chief. I desired that he should be brought up to me with his people, which was at once done. I asked him if it was true, as was reported throughout the country, that his tribe were cannibals. He at once became very communicative, and, without the slightest hesitation and evidently proud of the fact, told me that there was no person in his country over three years of age who had not eaten human flesh. In talking of slaves he stated that they rarely had any trouble with them, as when they ran away and were re-caught they were killed and eaten ; knowing what was in store for them, it was not often they did run away. His country was near to Gola on the Liberian side. In justice to the Mendis I must say that they have the greatest abhorrence of any such customs.

It is true that in the Imperri country in Lower Sherbro persons were waylaid and killed for the specific purpose

of supplying a lubricant for the fetish medicine Borfimor, and, as I have already related in the chapter on the Human Leopard Society, strangers were inveigled into partaking of a friendly meal in which atoms of human flesh had been mixed unknown to them, for the purpose of compelling them to join that Human Leopard Society. But in my opinion this was fetish and can bear no analogy to cannibalism in the general acceptation of the term. The Mendi people, so far as I know them, are not cannibals, and I think that they would be greatly pained if such an accusation were brought against them.

Continuing the march we came to a deep ravine which was spanned by two slight stems of trees, one of them rotten. After I had passed over it with the greatest difficulty, as also had several of the carriers, we began to ascend a mountain-side forest, and while I was pounding up it, one of my people overtook me to tell me that one of the boys had fallen through into the ravine below with his load, which contained my sextant, artificial horizon and several other things.

This sort of information when you are a great distance from the Coast is very apt to cause mutterings of an unparliamentary description which ill-disposed persons sometimes classify as early English. However, upon my hearing that the boy was not injured, my equanimity returned; and when I had an opportunity later on of examining the contents of the box, I was rejoiced to find that no serious damage had been done. The residential town of Duo Neami, the paramount chief of the Malema country, was Sagohun. This place we reached at a few minutes past three. On inquiring for the chief I was informed that he had gone on to the town of Malina which

was about three miles further on ; so I proceeded and soon ran into forests. Passing the town of Malema we got shut in by hills, and at 4.40 arrived at the town of Malina, which was in the valley on ground covered by very low vegetation.

On inquiring for the chief I could get no information. There were many people in the town, but no one who would incur any responsibility. Any person spoken to stated that he was a stranger, which is a very common and most convenient way of answering a question where it is not desired to give any information. Finding that no one in authority came forward to receive me I had houses selected for myself and people to occupy. During the evening two persons, a man and a woman, came to me with a live sheep as a present ; the woman said she was sister to the chief, and the man was also related, and that the chief was not in the town. I said I should keep the sheep until the morning, and that if I saw no chief before I left the town I should return it ; as I could accept no hospitality from any town where the chief and head men did not come forward to receive me. It was quite evident that I had been deceived when it was said that the paramount chief had come on to this town. It was merely a ruse to get rid of me, the chief possibly thinking that I should not return that way.

This day's march had been twenty-one miles. The rubber vine was seen in the bush ; oil-palms were very plentiful all the way ; palm-nuts were lying about the towns, and the people were busy making palm-oil for local consumption ; this part of the country being too far from the Coast for the produce to be available for commercial purposes without means of transport.

The next morning, as there was no appearance of any chief, I sent for the man and woman who had brought me the sheep, and returned it to them, expressing my regret at having to decline receiving it. I did not start until 10.30 ; I then left and returned by the same road to Sagohun. When I arrived there was still no chief to be seen, although plenty of people were in the town. I was told that the chiefs had been there last night, and that the old paramount chief, Duo Neami, had been there that morning. I sent messengers to try to find him, but to no effect ; and after waiting an hour I left the town. I had not, however, gone more than 150 yards when a messenger came running after me to say that the chief was now in the town, and he hoped I would return to see him. I did so ; he approached me and said that he had been in the town all the time, but that never having seen a white man he was afraid and had hidden himself in the bush. He was a very old and infirm man, so that I was prepared to make every allowance. After a little informal talk in the barri with him, he conducted me to a very decent mud hut, and sent to his sub-chiefs to attend a political meeting the next day at this town.

As I was strolling through the town in the afternoon I found that my boys had made themselves very comfortable, and were fraternising with the town-folk. They were busily engaged in playing Warre, which is the national Mendi game. It is played upon a raised board, usually of canoe shape, and with open carved work underneath, the whole being about eighteen inches long. The players sit on opposite sides. At each pointed end of the board is a compartment for depositing the iron buttons, or beans, with which they play. The board has a double row of shallow holes, six in a row ; these holes are called towns,



four beans are put into each hole. The beans represent the people of the towns, and the game is for one side to try and capture all the people represented by the beans in the towns of his antagonist. In pidgin English this is called "eating," so that instead of a person saying, "This thing belong for you, Massa, make you take em," he would say "make you eat em," but he does not intend that you should put it in your mouth and eat it; it is a characteristic way of implying that it was yours, and that you should receive it.

On returning to my hut it was just time for my primitive evening meal. The chief had kindly presented a little clean rice and a goat; as I do not, however, eat goat, my people benefited by it, but as it had to be divided among about forty, I am afraid that each man's share was very small; still as long as they can get a bit of what they call "flesh kind" to mix with their rice, they are satisfied, even if it is only a most minute piece.

When there is "flesh kind" for the carriers, it is given to the head-man, who shares it out most carefully. Sharing, in their vernacular, is called "shaving."

It was not until four o'clock the next afternoon that the chiefs had arrived, and I was enabled to hold the meeting. The usual formalities were gone through, and the chief signed the treaty; the evening was given over to tom-tom playing and dancing.

I intended to work back to the town of Yandahu in the Jave country, which was a cross road. A pilot was provided for me by the treaty chief, and the next morning at 6.30 I started away. For the first three hours we were passing through the Malema country, thence on to the Sami country, and thence to the Jave country, when after

eight hours' travelling we reached the town of Yandahu. Nearly the whole of the journey was by narrow tracks, through very wild and varied vegetation; we passed through some exquisite palmeries and ferneries. The tints of the leaves at that time of the year were very charming; it was the right season for seeing the ferneries in perfection.

We got into some young palmeries which were only seven or eight feet high, of the cane and fan palm descriptions, exquisitely beautiful; and strange to say these were on dry ground, instead of being in swamps and quagmires as they generally were; so I was able to wander amongst them and enjoy the delicacy of the foliage of the lovely creeping ferns, which were chiefly of the maiden-hair kind.

There being nothing special to detain me at this place I started the next morning for the town of Befuin, which was only five miles off by a good road. Here I had some little trouble with my carriers, most of whom professed to be more or less sick after their long march, this being our ninety-third day out on the tour. I therefore remained here, and as we arrived at 9.25 a.m. I allowed them to rest for the day, or, as they would term it, "sit down for blow."

These short breaks were sometimes very desirable, as they not only refreshed the men, but they enabled me to get on with my official reports. Here I was compelled to continue my writing until late in the evening. My little table was placed in front of the opening which did duty for a window; this was covered by a country mat. By and by a heavy tornado burst over the place; the high wind blew the mat against my lighted kerosene lamp,

which was standing on the table ; the lamp was knocked over, but fortunately I caught it before it reached the ground, and so saved what might have been a conflagration, that would perhaps have burnt down the whole town.

In the afternoon I was treated to a country dance the like of which I had never seen before.

Figure 67 shows three women having round their waists a musical instrument called the "Bunjue." This consists of a foundation of palm-leaf rope, from which depends a quantity of short pieces of rattan cane. Fixed to the other end of the cane are several halves of hard shells of large seeds. As the women dance, which they do with great energy, the sound of these half shells and the cane all rattling together, creates a noise which is quite in keeping with the native taste and is warmly applauded. I was very fortunate in obtaining this photograph, for, curiously enough, I have never seen a similar dance since.

The next morning at seven o'clock I left this town and did a fourteen-mile trot on to Mendikama, where I remained the night. Queen Mammy Lehbu was away, therefore I continued my journey the next day on to Juru, where I had to remain three clear days, to carry out the Government instructions relative to the crowning of Batte Kakka as the paramount chief of the Gaura country, in succession to the late chief Mendingra, who had died soon after making his treaty.

This succession had been established by a general consensus of opinion. I had some time before been to the town of Juru, and had remained there fourteen days to bring the sub-chiefs and people together, that I might



Fig. 67. — "THE BUNJE," DANCED BY WOMEN IN UPPER MENDI. *(To face page 244.)*



publicly hear from them whom they considered the proper person to succeed Mendingra. The late chief had a grown up son who was present, but he was not even named; this will show that primogeniture is not a *sine qua non* to a succession in Mendi law, and that chieftainship is not hereditary.

There was no relationship between the late chief and the chief who was proposed as his successor. He was brought forward as being the most suitable person for paramount chief. Several public meetings were held in the open barri, and on the twelfth day the general opinion was that Batte Kakka was the proper person to be elected. I therefore recommended this chief to the Government, and the present ceremony was the result of the adoption of my suggestion.

After the meeting was over at five o'clock I sat down to my dinner, which consisted of some boiled cocoas, something similar to potatoes, some boiled rice and tea. During this not over sumptuous repast I was serenaded by three singers, who were playing the sehguras.

The noise of this concert, coupled with the applause of the admiring crowd, made a perfect Babel. The novelty of these attentions soon wears away and they become wearisome; but of course all such compliments must receive their due appreciation, as natives are very sensitive in these matters. My dinner on that day was very modest, but the day before I know I had fared better, for my cook came to me asking for some soap. Upon my inquiring for what purpose it was needed, as soap was not an article, to be lightly parted with, he replied :

“ I bin able for get fowl, Massa, and I want de soap for make I wash de canda ” (skin).

I was not aware that he had been in the habit of washing the fowls I consumed, but he assured me that he always did so. As this was something new to me, I desired that he would bring me the fowl after it was plucked, which he did. I found that he was quite right ; the skin of the fowl was so dirty that it really seemed to require washing. I gave him the soap, and after using it he brought the fowl back, and I saw that it was altogether in appearance a different bird, and now looked as inviting as it had previously looked unattractive. After this there was no question about the soap ; but I am afraid I must have given him too much, for on coming into my hut I found that he was engaged in cleaning my celluloid collar with my one and only tooth-brush, to which some of the soap had been applied.

Amongst my kit I had with me a Madeira mosquito swish, which was simply a horse's tail fastened to the end of a short stick. When I showed this to the chief he went into raptures over it, and was very anxious to get possession of it, no such thing being in the country. He said that if he could get it, any time there was occasion for his messengers to be sent to other chiefs and they carried the tail, they and all other people would know that the messengers truly came from him. I did not however gratify his wish, as I required it myself. I was given to understand once when I was in the Yonni country that one of these tails could be exchanged for a person.

From Juru I proceeded to the Dama country to con-

clude a treaty with Hakawa, the paramount chief there. We started at eight o'clock in the morning through a thick Harmattan wind with a heavy falling mist, most dull and cheerless, and we very soon got amongst the hills. We passed the small town of Jagor, very prettily situated in a valley with several people about. Soon afterwards we ascended a hill of 320 feet elevation by aneroid ; this was covered by a tall, straight-stemmed tree resembling our poplar, but which was locally called "spice." By this time the sun was out powerfully, but the upper foliage of the forest was so dense that no sun could penetrate it.

These thousands of stems devoid of lower branches enabled us to obtain a view for some distance. The effect was most peculiar, the place was cold and dismal ; all was of a greenish-grey without a gleam of sun. We went through this for half an hour and got quite chilled ; emerging from it, we passed through a small fakai, and forty minutes after came to the town of Garun. It was a squalid and miserable place, but having got so cold I was glad to halt here and have my breakfast, which consisted of potted meat, dry biscuits, tea and bananas.

As soon as this was finished we were off again, and after going through three small fakais, where I saw them weaving matting for hammocks, at 1.40 we came to Pendaba, the residential town of Chief Hakawa.

This was a large town, but of the same squalid description as the last named. There were a great many huts, all of which were crowded together, and it was a dirty place generally ; however, the women and children were sitting



about in the entrances to the huts, and seemed actively employed in spinning cotton.

I remained here for the night, and the next morning I held a meeting, and the usual treaty was signed. As this town was well away from the main road, the roads were neglected and the country in a wild state.

I left the same day on my return to Juru, and from there I proceeded to Borbabu the residential town of the paramount chief Joseh, with whom I concluded a similar treaty. This being the last treaty it was necessary to make on this tour, I rapidly pushed on, passing over the same road by which I had previously travelled, until I reached Banda-suma. After leaving that town we came to a broad piece of water near to Fanima town. This water was surrounded by massive and beautiful trees, but the only means of conveyance was a small raft composed of five cork-wood posts lashed together. This raft could only take two men with their loads and a punter ; all, however, got over safely until the last journey of the carriers, when the raft was overloaded, and after going a short distance across a careless movement on the part of one of the men caused a trivial list in the raft, which slight as it was, was quite sufficient to drop the whole lot into the water.

Fortunately the things that were carried were not of any material importance, and did not suffer by the immersion. To the men it afforded infinite pleasure, and they took the opportunity of having a good swim. Near by was the town of Manni, where I remained for the night. This town is on the banks of the Sulima river, and all about I noticed large clam shells which were some four inches long. I thought that it would make a change if I could

get some of these shell fish for dinner, so I desired my cook to get a few. They appeared on the table in due course, but when I tried to bite a piece, I found that it was something like endeavouring to put one's teeth into india-rubber. It was quite impossible to make the smallest impression upon that clam. I sent for my cook to ask him which was the usual way of eating clams ; but his only reply was "Massa, if you want for eat dem ting—I fit for cook em for two days." As I wanted to leave in the morning I had to forgo the pleasure of eating clams, and from that day to this I have never resumed my acquaintance with them. The next day I returned to my original starting point, Sulima on the Coast. Sulima was my head centre from which I went into the interior. While at Sulima for the first time I realised what it was to be attacked by jiggers. I happened to occupy a hut which I did not then know, but which I soon found out afterwards, was infested by this pest. As every one knows, the jigger is a tiny insect which enters the skin, more usually the feet, causing an annoying irritation. Having bored its way into the flesh it proceeds to deposit a bag of eggs.

The natives are very good hands at removing this bag intact ; but occasionally they are not able to do so, when very bad open wounds result. In my case, I suffered so severely in both my feet that I was unable to wear boots for six weeks, and had it not been that I was fortunate enough to have a medical dresser with me, I should probably have had to be invalided home from the Coast. With my return to Sulima ended a long but successful tour into Mendi-land, resulting in friendly treaties being

made by the Government with a large number of paramount chiefs as detailed in the following list :—

TREATIES MADE BETWEEN T. J. ALLDRIDGE, J.P., TRAVELLING COMMISSIONER ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AND THE UNDER-MENTIONED PARAMOUNT CHIEFS IN UPPER MENDI, THEIR HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS.

No. of Treaty in Colonial Office List of Sierra Leone Treaties.	Date of Treaty.	Names of Paramount Chiefs.	Towns at which the Treaties were made and signed.	Names of Countries for which the Treaties were made.
	1890.			
113	Mar. 11	Mendingra . . .	Bandasuma . .	Gaura.
114	" 11	{ Amara Samawa (Sub-Chief) . . }	" . . .	{ Gorahun Tunkia.
115	" 16	Pau La-lama . . .	Gigbama . . .	Tunkia.
116	" 19	Bakoi (Sub-Chief) .	Juru . . . . .	{ Kokoru, Gaura.
117	" 19	{ Batti Kakka (Sub- Chief) crowned in succession to Chief Mendingra, April 1, 1891 . . }	Juru . . . . .	Puabu, Gaura.
118	" 26	Vande Saua . . .	Juru . . . . .	Gaura.
119	" 30	Kabba Seh . . .	Yandahu . . .	Jave.
120	April 1	Momo Babahu . .	Baiama . . .	Mando.
121	" 7	Kai Lundu . . .	Kangama . . .	Bambara.
122	" 15	Hakawa . . . . .	Kanri Lahun .	Luawa.
123	" 20	Joseh . . . . .	Pendebu . . .	Dama.
			Borbabu . . .	Koya.
	1891.			
137	Feb. 17	Sembe Fawundu .	Bandi Wuru .	Tunke.
138	" 21	Fabanna . . . . .	Yandahu . . .	Vassa.
139	Mar. 1	Bongoi . . . . .	Kolahun . . .	Bandi.
148	" 25	Duo Neame . . . .	Sagohun . . .	Malema.
	1894.			
	Dec. 24	Kabba Boma . . .	Faiema . . . .	Nomor.
	" 26	Sangwe . . . . .	Fangaworlahun	Subu.

This pioneer work into an almost unknown country was most important. Besides the advantage of personal intercourse with the native rulers and their sub-chiefs,

much information about the manners and customs of the peoples and the natural wealth of the country was gathered. For nearly ten years the treaties were faithfully kept, and throughout the land a reign of peace, unprecedented in its history, existed.

Cultivation of the ground went on apace everywhere. Crops were not only planted, but enjoyed by those who planted them. Towns were re-built, and in many places the population became almost congested. When in 1894 I re-visited those Lower Districts that I have described as seen in my first tour absolutely depopulated, I found no trace of the disastrous war of six years earlier. Not only were the old towns that had been destroyed rebuilt, but new ones had been erected, and so thick was the population that in some places it was almost too large. It was harvest time then, and the sight of the standing crops of rice, guinea corn, cus-cus, agoo seed, maize and cassada, in abundance everywhere, was what I had never witnessed before. Everybody appeared happy and contented, and as the people themselves forcibly remarked : "Rice plenty ; hungry no dare in de country."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE GOVERNOR, SIR FRANCIS FLEMING, K.C.M.G., MEETS THE TREATY CHIEFS AT BANDASUMA, 1893

AT the beginning of 1893, it was officially decided that the Governor, Sir Francis Fleming, should hold a great meeting in the Barri country in order that he might see and address the numerous paramount chiefs who had, since the opening up of the country, entered into treaty with the British Government. I was therefore instructed to proceed up the country to visit these chiefs and endeavour to bring them down to this proposed meeting.

I left Sulima on the 2nd of January, and the meeting was to be held at Bandasuma on the 7th of March, 1893, which allowed me two months to bring the chiefs together.

At first sight my task may appear a very easy matter, but in a country that is filled with superstition and in which the Mori fetish workers play so prominent a part and have so firm a hold upon the chiefs, through the country medicines, it is a work of almost insuperable difficulty. As I went along interviewing the chiefs and extending to them the invitation of the Governor to meet him, the affair required a very great deal of careful manipulation, because



*[To face page 25.]*

Fig. 68.—HIS EXCELLENCY SIR FRANCIS FLEMING, K.C.M.G., GOVERNOR OF SIERRA LEONE, 1892-4.



it must be remembered that most of these chiefs had never then left their own countries ; many only knew one another by name, and several of course were absolute strangers to each other. I found the chiefs had a rooted fear as well as objection to going beyond their own limits.

This fear was carefully fostered by the Mori men, and my greatest difficulty was in contending with the fetish influence of the itinerating Mori magician, whose interest it was, of course, to throw every impediment in my way. Naturally there was nothing visible that I could lay hold of, but I could feel its influence working all around me. As I went from country to country I delivered the same message, but unfortunately I was not in a position to arrange for the commissariat of the chiefs and their followers.

I thought, however, it would be best to be quite plain with them on this subject ; therefore I told them, when giving them the invitation, that they would have to take their own provisions with them, adding that, as I had given them plenty of notice, they ought to have no difficulty in collecting it in time. This did not appear to distress them, but they seemed merely to enjoy it as a joke. As I got further up country, of course the distance for the chiefs to travel down was very greatly increased, until upon getting to Kanre Lahun it was as much as 120 miles. Those who pause to consider what it is to bring chiefs and their large retinues, strangers themselves through a strange country, for so long a journey, extending over many days, will perhaps be able to understand what my difficulties were. On my upward expedition I always informed the chiefs that I would pick them up with their people and add them to the column on my way back, and that they were to be in readiness. But time with them is an unknown quantity,



so that when returning I often found that no preparation had been made, which naturally caused considerable delay. Sometimes when I was ready to start upon my downward journey and everything had been settled for a definite move, I was in the seventh heaven of delight, and began to feel that half my troubles were over, but I was frequently doomed to disappointment. Fetish influence must have been at work, and all sorts of reasons would be made for a postponement of the start. A chief was sick ; a sub-chief had not arrived ; rice had not come in, and a thousand and one excuses would be brought forward. It was no use getting out of temper ; it was no use doing anything more than offering one's sympathy and hoping that the start would be made the next day. Then perhaps one chief would say, that he was quite ready to go down if a certain other chief that he named was also going. Kai Lundu, whose town was the limit of my journey, was at war with the Sofas and was also sick. He said, however, that if nothing unforeseen with regard to his war should happen, he himself would attend the meeting, but otherwise he would send down a chief to represent him.

As my time was getting on, I decided to start from Kanre Lahun the next day, but I left a couple of Frontiers to specially escort Kai Lundu down if he were able to leave. He was to come to a conclusion in eleven days and in the event of his being unable to proceed himself, his representative was to come. On leaving the town, Kai Lundu and many of his people came with me for a short distance. Finding that I was starting without any chiefs, I felt somewhat depressed, but that feeling was very greatly increased upon my getting to Gahun, where a wailing concert went on from 5 till nearly 7 o'clock, just outside my

hut. As wailing for deceased friends or relatives forms an important part of country ceremonies, it would have been injudicious to interfere with a custom which is one of the old land-marks amongst native institutions, so that I was compelled to bear it.

I shifted my quarters the next day to Kangama, the chief of which town was Momo Babahu, who came to my hut with some of his sub-chiefs. I was in hopes that they were about to say they were ready to leave with me the next day, but my hopes were again dashed to the ground. He said, however, that he would leave on the fourth day, and meet me at Yandahu in the Jave country, stating that he was collecting country cloths to present on the way down, as it was not customary for chiefs to travel through other chiefs' countries without making some present. This appeared to me not only to show a very proper feeling but to be perfectly reasonable, so I agreed to his proposal, and the next morning I left for Chief Kabba Seh's town in the Mando country. Upon reaching there the chief said that he had called a meeting at the town of Potaru for the next day and that he was going to it, and would return on the following day. I understood the meeting was to be a good-bye gathering previous to his going. When he returned he said it was decided that those who were going down to Bandasuma should leave in six days' time, but that he would meet me at Yandahu as soon as he heard that Momo Babahu had arrived there. After my arrival at that town Momo Babahu came in with a few people. He said that his people had been averse to his coming; but that as he was determined to go with me, he had come on prepared to do so with seven of his followers, which were all that he could get together. Three days after-

wards Kabba Seh arrived and paid me perhaps the greatest compliment that I had ever received from any chief. Though he did not know, he said, where he was going to, I had never deceived the chiefs, and for that reason he was prepared to follow me. He came with a large retinue, so at last I was able to make a fair start. The chief of Yandahu promised to come down later with his people, and at his request I left a constable to escort him. A start was accordingly made on Monday, February 20th, and we went on for some miles until we arrived at the town of Naiama.

Upon reaching Naiama, where we were going to remain the night, I noticed that the chiefs sat down with their followers in the centre of the town and made no attempt to obtain huts for their accommodation. I asked them the reason, and their reply was that they were not within their own countries, and that as they were my strangers, they were waiting for me to locate them. I saw the reasonableness of this remark and I at once provided them with proper accommodation. We reached Mendi-kema the next day, where excellent quarters were obtained for all, the town being large and having good houses with open spaces between them. Mammy Lehbu, the Queen of Upper Gaura, whose town it was, unfortunately was suffering with a bad knee and she objected to riding in a hammock. All the worry and anxiety which I had gone through, and was going through, gave me a dose of fever and I had to remain here the next day. We then pushed on to Juru and as our advent was now becoming known, a sufficiency of houses had been already prepared. But there was no occasion to remain here more than one night, as the paramount chief Batte Kaka's town was at

Puabu five miles away. Arriving at Puabu I was rejoiced to find that the treaty chief from Bande-Wuru was already there with some of his wives and followers, Batte Kakka saying that he would be ready to start in four days. I occupied the largest house that I had ever had. It contained twelve mud beds round the wall. With my small lamp I could only very indistinctly see at night a very little of the inside, the further part being in total darkness ; but from sundry sounds that reached me I very soon discovered that I was not the only occupant, and that various goats, fowls and sheep were sharing my quarters. We quitted Puabu on the fourth day with chiefs and followers altogether numbering about 150 persons. The procession as it left the town was a sight to behold, for a considerable number of people had come out to see us start. What with the blowing of horns, the rattle of the sehguras, the singing of the women and the beating of tom-toms, all going it as hard as they could at the same time, while the singers of the chiefs yelled out their praises, and brushed them down with cows' tails as they reclined in their hammocks, the noise was deafening. Altogether the sounds and sights were such that I am not likely soon to forget ; but I enjoyed it as much as the people, and encouraged them to continue, letting them know how much I appreciated it, and that it was impossible that they could give me too much of it. In ordinary times it might not perhaps have been so acceptable ; but on this occasion it was more than welcome, because I knew that everybody was pleased and that success was taking the place of my previous disappointments, that the chiefs and people were now thoroughly roused, and that my difficulties and obstacles

were fast disappearing. I knew that the effect of these people passing through the country would stimulate the desire of a vast number of other chiefs and people to be present at the meeting, and as it turned out subsequently, my conjectures were correct. The next town we stopped at was Gigbama in the Tunkia country, where I remained two clear days, and gathered in more chiefs with their followers from different parts. The column was now of considerable length. As we moved out of the town it was a most imposing sight, and of course at all towns that we went through the music struck up and the pandemonium recommenced. We then passed on to the large town of Gorahun. This was our last resting place before reaching our destination, Bandasuma. I sent on to the corporal in charge of the frontier police stationed there to inform him of my approach with a column of some hundreds of people, telling him that I should be there in the afternoon, and that every preparation was to be made for our accommodation. On Thursday, March 2nd, we started away at 7 o'clock, and in order that there might be no stragglers, I had the whole regiment of chiefs and their followers in front of me. Upon my reaching the small town of Samatea, chief Batte Kakka reported to me that near by one of his men had trodden on a snake and that he had died within a few minutes. I found that the man was not only dead but had been done up in mats ready for carrying on. I immediately had the mats opened that I might see for myself what had taken place, when I discovered two very distinct punctures on the right ankle. There was no doubt about the man being dead; his face bore a remarkably placid expression, as if he had died without the slightest pain. The mat was then closed and

the body carried on to the next place, which was the large town of Sembehun, and there buried.

Batte Kakka stated to me that they considered this such a very bad omen that they certainly would have all turned back had they been going to a country palaver ; but that as I had brought them down to attend a Governmental meeting they should not regard it in the same light but would proceed. Everything being so far arranged, the march was resumed until we were within a mile and a half of Bandasuma, when I found that the chiefs and people stopped in a very beautiful cool glade. Unaware of the cause of this sudden stoppage, I passed through the lines in my hammock to ascertain the reason. As I was doing so Batte Kakka said that the place appointed for the meeting was so far that they could not go any further and must return. The sudden bursting of such a piece of information upon me when I had almost succeeded in reaching my goal naturally upset me very much, and I suppose I must have shown it in my face, as Batte Kakka added, that I was not to trouble, as they had only stopped to try me and to see what effect it would have upon me, and that they were quite ready to go on ; which they immediately did, the chiefs laughing and joking amongst themselves at the scare they had given me. In half an hour we entered the town of Bandasuma when I found that every possible arrangement had been made for our comfort. The inhabitants had practically given over the town for our use, and had located themselves in some of the surrounding fakais. The place was beautifully clean and furbished up ; a gigantic shed had been specially erected for the meeting, as well as two large sheds for the carriers, and a house for the Governor.

The chiefs seemed very much pleased with the state of the town, the condition of the roads, and the thought that had been bestowed upon the preparations for their comfort. All of these chiefs were accompanied by a small contingent of their wives, varying in number from five upwards—one chief bringing no less than thirty-two. The meeting was fixed for Monday, the 6th ; but on the previous Saturday some of the chiefs came to me and said how anxious they were to get away as soon as possible as it was their farming time. Of course I was without any means of providing food for them, which did not ease matters at all. However, I let them know that in two days I quite expected that the Governor would be there. When that day came, however, I had no tidings of the approach of the Governor, and I was beginning to think that it would be no easy matter to keep such a large number of people, who had nothing whatever to do, together for many days. The next day, not to improve matters, a tornado came on about noon, accompanied by heavy rain which lasted some hours. I hoped that the roofs of the houses were fairly water-tight, I can only say that as regards my own the rain came through the thatching like water through a colander. During the day also there were renewed murmurings from the chiefs, who wanted badly to return ; but I kept reassuring them that they would not have long to wait, and for the moment this pacified them. The following day chief Kailundu's representative arrived with about thirty-four people, bringing a bullock and a sheep as a Governmental present. On the Friday messengers arrived from Sulima with the information that the Governor might arrive there this day, in which case I did not expect to see him here until the next

Monday. This was rather depressing news, as the town was now so crowded with chiefs coming in from all parts, for whom there was no room, that they had to remain at outside fakais. On Sunday I received official information that the Governor was then at Fanima on the way up and that he would arrive the next day. The messengers brought me twenty bags of rice and two bags of leaf tobacco, which was a perfect god-send, as it enabled me to distribute food to the hungry people. The same day two of the Upper Kittam chiefs came in. These were Momo Kaikai and Momo Ja, who arrived riding in hammocks and attended by a large crowd of followers playing and singing and causing a perfect babel.

At 2 o'clock the next day, Monday, the 13th of March, His Excellency Sir Francis Fleming arrived, to my intense relief, and entered the town; a grand guard of honour was drawn up, comprising forty Frontiers under an inspector, and the Governor was received and welcomed by me amidst the acclamations and excitement of the vast concourse of chiefs and people who had been brought together. I conducted him to his house, which for bush quarters were the best I think that I have ever seen. I had the same morning sent the people to gather a great quantity of feathery palm leaves and mossy fern, and with these I had the house elaborately decorated. I informed the Governor that I thought there was a feeling of uncertainty and unrest amongst the chiefs, as to the purport of this meeting—superstitious fear always being present in the minds of chiefs. Notwithstanding that the Governor had only just come in after a tedious and trying journey, he asked me whether if he held a levee of the principal chiefs at 5 o'clock, that would tend to allay their fears



and put them at their ease, preparatory to the big public meeting which was to take place on Wednesday. As the plan was a most politic and excellent one I went round to the twelve principal chiefs and communicated to them the information that I would bring them before the Governor that afternoon when he would see them and speak to them, and remove any lingering doubt that they might have in regard to their presence at Bandasuma. When the time arrived to hold the levee, the chiefs were brought in and ranged round the wide verandah of the Governor's quarters, when dressed in his official uniform the Governor entered.

After a short introductory speech from me his Excellency addressed the chiefs, and in a very few minutes gained their entire confidence, and from the joyous expressions upon their faces it was evident that whatever misgivings they had entertained when coming to the levee, the tactful kindness of the Governor had entirely dispelled. At sunset I conducted the Governor round the town to inspect the different chiefs' quarters. The big meeting was arranged for Wednesday at 3 o'clock.

Shortly before that time the chiefs began to arrive ; every chief took up his position surrounded by his people in the specially erected shed, 90 feet long by 50 feet wide, which was gaily bedecked with flags brought up for the occasion. The Upper Mendi chiefs were arranged in prominent positions according to their status, and the overwhelming numbers of the Lower Mendi chiefs and people promptly filled every available space. The actual number of persons who were able to find sitting accommodation within the shed was 2,998, irrespective of those forming a living fringe outside. The excitement of the people before the Governor

came in to the meeting was intense. As many of the chiefs had brought their singers and other musicians the time was passed by the playing of these massed bands. I think in all my travels I never previously experienced such a babel of sound ; but I had the people now completely under control as I had arranged that upon my holding up my hand instant quietness should prevail, which was strictly carried out.

The Governor was received by a guard of honour, and when I had conducted him to his place upon the raised dais he delivered his address, which, although of considerable duration, was listened to with rapt attention. Afterwards "goodwill" offerings, consisting of bullocks, sheep, cows, ivory, and country cloths, were tendered by the chiefs, and received on behalf of the Government, and presents in return were made on the following day.

There were exactly a hundred chiefs, or their representatives present at this meeting and, notwithstanding that there must have been frequently from three to four thousand persons in the town, there was no disturbance of any kind. The next morning at half past seven the Governor started on his return to Sulima, previously having invited me to accompany him. But while thanking His Excellency I explained to him that as a great many of the chiefs were strangers in the place, and that they had implicitly followed me so great a distance on my assurance that they should be escorted back by police, I considered that it was not only my duty but an act of policy to remain at Bandasuma until I had seen them all safely away, so with the Governor's approval I stayed at Bandasuma. A great many chiefs and people followed the Governor for a short distance along the road to give him a good send off. On our way back to the

town I asked one of the big chiefs how they all liked the Governor? He replied that they liked him very much, but that they liked their own Governor better. Upon my asking who that person might be, he told me it was myself, and that what they would like was, that I should sit down amongst them in their country, and that they might give me their daughters for wives. I said that I was very much obliged to them for the honour that they desired to confer upon me, but according to my country's law, I was only allowed to have one wife, and that as I had already that one, it would be useless for me to give the matter further consideration, so the subject dropped; but in order that they should not feel their disappointment too keenly I had a bullock killed and gave them a good feast. I then saw to the getting away of the chiefs and people and on the third day I was able to leave for Sulima myself. Chief Kabba Seh, who was anxious to have a look at the sea, accompanied me with many of his people, and we all arrived safely at Sulima on Wednesday March 22nd. So ended this ever-memorable meeting, an assembly of chiefs and people altogether unprecedented in the history of political gatherings in the colony of Sierra Leone.

The bringing of these people into friendly communication with each other and with the Government and the consequent cessation of tribal hostilities, was a tremendous step in advance. Boundaries, however, had not yet been delimited, and if the Government then entertained the idea of forming a Protectorate, that view had not been made public. The invasion of the Konno country by the Sofas, a few months later, is the next event I shall have to chronicle, as it had an important bearing on the history of the Colony.





*From a Photograph by Gunn and Stewart.*

*To face page 265.*

**Fig. 69.—His Excellency SIR FREDERIC CARDEW, K.C.M.G., GOVERNOR OF  
SIERRA LEONE SINCE 1894.**

## CHAPTER XXV

### HIS EXCELLENCY SIR F. CARDEW'S TOUR IN THE HINTERLAND OF THE COLONY

A FEW months after the great Bandasuma meeting the Konno country was invaded by Sofas, who are now quite outside the sphere of British influence, and whose chief town is Pandeme in the Bunde country, which was the limit of my treaty tours.

The Konno people, although they had not made any treaty with us, were within our sphere. The Sofas not only absolutely destroyed this country, but were attempting to penetrate further into our colony; it was therefore necessary to expel them by military force. West Indian troops commanded by Colonel Ellis, together with Frontier Police under Inspector-General Captain Lendy, who was killed at Waima, successfully conducted this punitive expedition and drove back the invading Sofas, but not before they had ruined the place. This war was concluded at the end of 1893.

The health of the Governor, Sir Francis Fleming had suffered considerably from the climate, and he was therefore transferred to the Leeward Islands. Early in March 1894 Sir Frederic Cardew, K.C.M.G., took over the

administration of the Colony and was appointed Governor the following November.

Sir Frederic had hardly been three weeks in Freetown when, with a view of more efficiently dealing with the Hinterland, he at once initiated a series of interior expeditions such as none of his predecessors had hitherto attempted, and of which he was himself the leader. By this means he penetrated into many entirely untraversed provinces of the far Hinterland and personally collected a mass of information of the highest practical value and of enormous political importance.

I had the honour of accompanying His Excellency upon his first overland tour, acting on that occasion as topographer and astronomical observer.

The expedition, a column 400 strong, left Freetown, Sierra Leone, on March 26th 1894, and returned on May 17th, after an absence of fifty-two days.<sup>1</sup>

The route, which will be found on the map of Sierra Leone, was by way of Waterloo, Songo Town and across the Ribbi River to Rotifunk, Manjehun, Moyamba, Kwalu, Taiama, Mongeri and Panguma to Waima in the Konno country; then to Kamaror and Kinta Balia in the Kuranko country, through Tibaba Dugu and Koina Dugu on to Falaba in Dembella, by the Warra Warra Limba and Sehla Limba countries to Yana and Samaya in the

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Hay had, it is true, made several long tours. These, however, had for the most part run parallel with the coast line, and had not penetrated beyond about fifty miles inland. His tours included journeys from Kambia on the Great Scarcies to Mano Salija, the south-eastern boundary of the Colony, passing through Taiama-Jama and Tikonko.

It was to Sir James Hay that the Colony owes the organising of the new interior policy and the establishment of the Frontier Police, both of which have been extended by later Governors.

Tambakka country; thence through Kukuna in Tonko Limba to Robat on the Great Scarcies River and by water back to Freetown.

It was not until we reached the Konno country, on the nineteenth day after leaving Freetown, that we became painfully aware of the results of the Sofa wars, and of other tribal raids. The whole of this country had been entirely depopulated. For some days we travelled through a region where, with the exception of our own people, not a living soul was to be seen and where not a town nor even a hut was standing.

Here and there we came upon an overrun wilderness that not long before had been a clearing in the dense and majestic forest, on which some peopled town had evidently stood; for a closer examination among the young weeds and shrubs disclosed the foundations and burnt fabric of numerous huts which had formed too lately the homes of the oppressed Konnos. A more gloomy or more saddening sight it would be impossible to portray.

In its natural resources the country's wealth seemed unlimited. Palm nuts liberally bestrewed the little track along which the column wended its way, and the rubber vine was everywhere to be found adorning the forest with its graceful festoons. It was indeed pitiable that a country so bountifully supplied by nature, should then be found in the state it was.

For the time being the country had ceased to be an inhabited land, so completely had it been depopulated by wars that had no other cause than the furnishing supplies for the nefarious traffic in human beings which was then going on.

The slave trade has from time immemorial been



associated with West Africa. In former times Spanish ships used to go in to the Gallinas river near to Sulima and there receive their living cargoes ; but all that was stopped by the intervention of the British Government many years ago.

The interior, however, being then under the control of the chiefs, the trade in slaves continued locally ; and although they were not deported by sea, they could be transported overland for very considerable distances from one country to another.

Upon our arriving at the town of Mongeri, before reaching Konno, we found awaiting us a slave-dealer who had just been captured upon the road by the police. The party consisted of the slave-dealer, a man, a woman and her child, as shown in Figure 70.

Before they were released I caused them to sit down upon the ground, in order that I might take a photograph of them exactly as they were without the smallest preparation.

Immediately this was done they were set free. It will be seen that a rope round their necks connects the man and the woman. The slave-dealer considered it very hard upon him that he should be deprived of what he held to be his legitimate purchases ; for, as he stated, he had bought the people near by and was then taking them to the Susu country, a French possession a long way off, to exchange them for cattle. He said he had paid eight pieces of cloth for the man, eight pieces for the woman, and three pieces for the child, the value of a piece of such cloth being probably three shillings. I may state that no relationship existed between the man and woman ; they had been selected and hitched together for the journey.

At another town a girl of about nineteen years of age



Fig. 70.—A SLAVE DEALER WITH SLAVES AT MONGERI.



*See face page 268.*

Fig. 71.—THE GRAVES AT WAIMA, KONNO COUNTRY.  
The Result of the Collision between French and British Troops,  
December, 1893. (Page 274.)



was found stocked ; that is, she was fastened by an iron band round the left ankle to a billet of wood two feet nine inches in length and seventeen inches in circumference. The nails used to fasten the band to the wood were three and a half inches in length. It took several minutes to release this poor creature from the wood, which was very hard, as we had only police swords to work with and there was danger that her flesh might get lacerated during the operation.

At Kinti Balia in Kuranko seven women were released. Their delight at getting their unexpected freedom was prettily displayed by their prostrating themselves before the Governor and hugging His Excellency's ankles. At that time indeed the slave trade was rife all over the country from one end of it to the other. I have seen single slaves being led with a halter of country rope round their necks as a man would lead a dog.

These few instances will, I think, suffice to give a very good idea of the slave trade as it was carried on before the Government proclaimed a Protectorate over the Hinterland of the colony of Sierra Leone. Of course with the Protectorate came the entire abolition of the traffic in human beings. A good many of the chiefs have naturally felt aggrieved at this breaking down of an old custom from which they derived a considerable revenue ; but it follows that the getting of slaves in large numbers meant a state of continual warfare, and of raids against which the people had no security whatever. It was said to me by some of the people, when I asked them why they did not cultivate the ground more, they did not care to plant because they never knew whether they would be there to eat the crops or not. By the creation of the Protectorate and the

supervision now given by the Government, I am satisfied that, although it may be distasteful to some of the chiefs, who merely look for sordid gain, the majority of the people feel and appreciate what the Government has done for them and the country. When I have been going through their towns they have prostrated themselves before me and spontaneously expressed their thanks to the Government.

Some chiefs allege that their slaves run away from them, and that therefore they are unable to get their produce gathered or their farms cultivated. If slaves run away, in the majority of cases it is because they are badly treated, and, the door of freedom being open to them, if they can succeed in getting into places within the colony where they are free to work for themselves as their own masters, I do not think anybody can blame them. Experience has shown that where good treatment exists, slaves who have been a long time with their masters, and have become what is known as domestics of the house, do not run away. They have been brought up in the house, given wives, raised children, and to all intents and purposes have become part and parcel of the house-family; but naturally the younger members, when they see the liberty enjoyed by those who are not tied up in slavery, but are free to work profitably for themselves, become dissatisfied; and when an opportunity for their own freedom arises they avail themselves of it. Up to the time of getting to the Konno country we had always been able to sleep at some town at night but now we had to camp in the open.

Twenty-five minutes before arriving at the Konno country we passed some running water which was spanned by the long trunk of a single oil palm, six feet above the

water. The crossing of some of these single logs is more suited for a tight rope walker than an ordinary human being; however, somehow or other one manages to get over them safely. As soon as we got into the Konno country we met with all sorts of palm jungles, wild vegetation and forests. In one of these forests my party got out of touch with the main column, as it frequently became necessary for me to stop while observations were made and compass bearings taken. Part of this journey was now so bad that we only did a mile an hour.

Having become separated we missed our way, and after a short time, finding we were going in a wrong direction the men began to look about, and the sharp eyes of one of them soon found a widish running water with partially submerged boulders all about it. He came back and reported that he had found the way, and upon my going to the spot indicated, I asked him why he thought that was the way the others had gone, when he pointed to certain small wet patches on the top of some of the rocks in the water, saying that those were the footmarks of some of the men who had passed over. This ultimately turned out to be correct, as upon crossing we found the track by which they had travelled.

We continued on for some time until we came to the Bangeh river, alongside which we found the Governor had halted to bivouac for the night. This river ran through a forest.

All the men were set to work to clear the small undergrowth, to cut down leaves, branches and sticks with which to put up some temporary shelter for the night. This was soon done; our evening meal under the trees was prepared and eaten, after which we retired.

Although my leafy bower was only about seven feet by four, and I had nothing but leaves to sleep upon, I threw myself down upon them having a very fine and open view of the stars above. I was so dead tired that I was very soon off to sleep. During the night I was awakened by a light shower of rain beating upon me, but gathering up my clothes, boots, and books on to my leaves I enveloped myself and everything else in a waterproof sheet, and was soon once more fast asleep. The whole shelter being entirely of leaves the ventilation was perfect, making the place delightfully cool, and I got up at four in the morning feeling thoroughly refreshed, as, I believe, did everybody else. After having our tea we started off and crossed several deep ravines, bad swamps and various streams. In three hours we came to the Loava river, which however was only thigh deep, and there being no bridge we had to ford it.

Continuing through dense forest bush for a further two hours, we came to the Maleh river with a lot of partially submerged rocks about it. At this part it was only fifty feet wide, and as a massive tree had fallen right across we got over by it. We worked along the side of this stream for some distance, the place becoming very hilly, with mountains in the distance. It was evident that a great number of locusts had passed over that part of the country recently, for as we went through a pineapple grove, we saw that all the leaves had been eaten off by them.

At one o'clock, after having travelled eleven miles we came to the remains of a small town, called Koronko. The only things standing were the ruins of two square huts which consisted of bits of two side mud walls without any roof whatever. However with the addition of sticks

and leaves we were able to transform these walls into comfortable shelters, one of which was occupied by the Governor, the other by myself. Here we had a fine view of the Kundu mountain range, the Maleh river flowing between the town we were in and this range. We left this bivouac the next morning, following a bush track through dense vegetation leading to cane brakes.

After passing through the cane brakes we came to a forest. Sometimes our path lay alongside of the Maleh, then the stream was lost and picked up again at various points. On emerging from the forest we got into a lot of open vegetation, with hills near us. The atmosphere here was so fresh and invigorating that it seemed to fill us with renewed energy. To me, personally, it was a most delightful sensation. The contrast between this climate and that near the Coast was most remarkable. There was no feeling of lassitude here, but a delightful sensation of buoyancy which I have never forgotten and never can forget. The rough travelling was not remembered in this most enjoyable weather.

Close by was a steep bare gradient of granite leading to a high hill ; upon the summit of which, standing out in relief against the sky, were a number of armed war-boys who had been sent from the town of Waima, which was an hour's march further on. As we approached them it seemed as if they were under some misapprehension as to who or what we were. They had evidently come out with the intention of fighting. The Governor, however, who was at the head of the column, went forward with the interpreter and reassured them of the peacefulness of the expedition. With this explanation they were satisfied and pleased, and subsequently conducted us to the town of



Waima, which was situated in a valley with some large cotton trees around it.

The town consists of about fifty huts.

It was on the 16th of April that we arrived at Waima. This was about four months after the unfortunate collision between the French and the English had occurred. Many of the huts were riddled by bullets. It will be sufficient for the purpose of this narrative to mention the kindly care which the Governor bestowed upon the graves of French and English, officers and men alike, who fell in that much-to-be-regretted action. By his orders the burial ground was cleared and the graves fenced in before we took our departure from that melancholy town, with its sorrowful surroundings and its most painful associations. Figure 71 shows the cemetery after it had been put in order, and was taken late in the afternoon under a drizzling rain and with an exposure of thirty seconds.

When we were leaving Waima the chief had given us a pilot who took us for half-an-hour through fields of hog grass and swamps, leading us into a gigantic quagmire knee deep in slush, which was overshadowed by tall trees. The carriers had to wade with their loads, the hammock men taking the Governor and myself and the other officers on their shoulders. It was a most curious sight to see a number of white men sitting a-straddle in this fashion, going with extreme caution through this ocean of liquid black mud. We went on for a few minutes, when it was evident that we were not going in the right direction. How far this quagmire extended I do not know, but it continued as far as we could see; and as all the foliage was right away on the tops of the trees, and the trunks were not too close together, we could see for a considerable

distance ahead ; the Governor therefore turned the column back. Upon getting on to the dry ground once more we discovered that our pilot had made a *détour* upon his own account, as he was anxious to take the Governor and the column through his own town, which would have taken us beyond the sphere of British influence. Hunting about we found a narrow track, along which we went, and which proved to be the proper one. It took us into open country, through grassy fields interspersed with oil palms and other trees, clearings for farms and enormous rocky boulders. We continued this kind of travelling, the ground being always covered with these extraordinary boulders. When we arrived at the small town of Kayema about noon, we found we had only gone nine miles in about five hours ; but we had passed through twelve swamps and three quagmires, and had crossed seven running streams.

The next morning we started at half-past five and went on through very wild country. We were now in that part of the country where the Sofa war had been at its height. There was evidence all around us of the calamities which overwhelmed the Konno people ; and when we came to a halt at half-past one to bivouac for the night after fourteen miles travelling, we had not met a single soul, and had only seen a few ruined foundations showing where the towns had stood.

The large granite boulders were everywhere ; wildernesses, jungles, cane brakes, forests, quagmires, swamps were successively gone through ; hills were ascended and descended, and wherever we came to any kind of light foliage the heat was insufferable, but more particularly so when we were going through the long cane brakes by very

narrow tracks. The canes, which were about twelve feet high, as they were forced on one side by our column, had an inconvenient habit of springing back and inflicting painful cuts and blows upon the faces of those who followed. Some idea may be gathered of the intense heat which we endured from the fact that I developed on my left fore arm a lump the size of a duck's egg, which took all the natural shape away, and that it was some days before the swelling disappeared.

On this day we had passed through twenty swamps, four quagmires, and crossed twelve running streams. The bush was cleared for our encampment, and the leafy huts erected by our people. We slept there that night, this being our third bivouac in the Konno country.

We were on the march at six o'clock the next morning, and continued passing through the same sort of country, but with more oil palms about and very bad wild jungles. After three hours and three-quarters we ran into some low grass, which gave us a view right ahead of us, in a north-easterly direction, of the distant Kinke mountains. Owing to so many difficulties our progress became very slow. At 10.35 we came upon a little running water about twenty-five feet wide, which was our first meeting with the Bafeh river. This we forded, and came to a halt for that *al fresco* meal which we so much needed after a ten miles most laborious tramp. Very little time was lost at these bush meals, as it was the Governor's plan always to have the food for himself and his staff put into a separate box making a load, which was kept close handy; so that whenever his Excellency came to a favourable spot he was enabled to halt the column, and the meal was served without delay, the officers sitting about upon fallen trees,

loads, boxes, or the first thing that came to hand. As I had my topographical work to do I was not always able to join in this repast ; sometimes an hour went by before I got up to that spot, by which time everybody had gone on goodness knows where, and I would find a solitary man sitting down beside the track, nursing the portion the Governor had thoughtfully left for me.

Moving on we again came upon this Bafeh water, when it had now grown to thirty-five feet wide. There was no bridge whatever, and the water was thigh deep ; so we had to have recourse to the men's shoulders, and they landed us in safety on the other side. The Kinke hills became visible again at two o'clock, as we had got into some dwarfed vegetation ; but what rejoiced the hearts of the men more than the sight of the Kinke hills were a number of orange trees laden with the most delicious fruit, with which they regaled themselves. We got along through the usual wild diversity of vegetation until at 3.55 we once more came to the Bafeh, which we crossed by fallen trees, and we encamped for the night in the great forest. The journey for the day had been twenty miles ; this was our fourth bivouac.

We started away early the next morning, and after going for only a few minutes, to our surprise we again came upon the Bafeh. This certainly presented the most wonderful phenomenon that we had met with in the whole of this tour. At the spot we now crossed it was fully 150 yards wide, with immense forest trees lining both banks. Looking up and down this wide vista nothing but huge shapeless blocks of rock were to be seen. Not a drop of water visible from the banks of this extraordinary river ; but on obtaining a footing upon these rocks and gazing down into deep uncanny looking crevices, just large enough to allow one's

body to glide comfortably through, it was at once made clear that these amorphous masses of rock were resting in dire confusion one upon the other, in layers three and four deep, and that the water was swirling, with a continuous and ugly sound, through such apertures as it could find below.

Standing upon an enormous boulder in the centre of this rocky river, the grandeur which this spectacle presented filled one with amazement and awe; and it is impossible that it can ever be forgotten by those whose privilege it was to witness it.

While I was standing on this boulder admiring the scene, the interpreter, a Mohammedan, came up to me, and with a look of astonishment said, "Massa, this nar God work; not man nar do this thing."

It is needless to say that the transporting of the column and baggage over such a dangerous and difficult place was anxious work; but, happily, in about two hours every man and everything was safely conveyed across, and we resumed the march, over ground strewn thickly with innumerable huge boulders.

At 12.40 we pulled up, having only done nine miles that day, and, for the fifth time, cleared the bush for our night encampment. We had arrived early, so I spent the afternoon in plotting out our journey, and bringing the route up to date; as, where I could not obtain astronomical observations, I determined the position by dead reckoning and compass bearings.

We were on the march at 5.30 the next day. The same monotonous travelling continued for nineteen miles, when at five minutes past two we reached the destroyed town of Kaiema.

Kaiema was probably the last town attacked by the Sofas. We noticed the remains of several corpses lying about, and around it found the ruins of five other towns all belonging to it. Just beyond we came to a narrow running stream in a picturesque valley. There we halted for the night.

This was our sixth bush encampment. The following day the march was resumed at six o'clock, and proved to be the most laborious that we had yet made. We went through every description of vegetation, along gully tracks, over old farms now wildernesses, through burnt-down fakais, across rocky streams, through palmeries and forests.

The country was a mass of rocky blocks, until at last, after fourteen miles of extremely severe marching, we emerged from a forest, and saw near by, across some open low vegetation, a high hill. Further on we came to barricades at the base of the hill. There was a difficult ascent over blocks of granite, and at the top we found the two towns of Kamaror each encircled by two war fences.

The view from this elevation of the country for miles around was magnificent, showing low hills, high hills, and valleys covered by vegetation of every kind, size, and height. In the far distance the lofty Kinke range of mountains was particularly prominent. The panorama was a truly grand and wonderful sight, and worth all the discomfort that we had experienced during the day. Without exception this was certainly the most lovely and picturesque scenery I had ever seen in Western Africa. There were only a few people here; it was said that most of them had gone to Kinta Balia for protection against the war raids.

With Kamaror we had left the Konno country, and were

now in the Kuranko country. In the six days' march from Waima to Kamaror we had passed through no less than 171 swamps, running streams, and quagmires, and we had slept in the forest every night—not a single person had we met; not a single hut had we seen.

Our encampments were picturesque, though hardly suited for anything but fine weather; but fortunately, although the rain while we were on the march frequently soaked us to the skin, our clothes drying upon us, we quite escaped what we really dreaded,—being washed out of our temporary leafy dwellings by heavy nightly downpours, with their tornado accompaniments, which now and again threatened, but happily passed over.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SIR FREDERIC CARDEW'S TOUR—(*continued*)

WE stayed only one night at Kamaror, and the following morning we left by the light of lamps, as we knew from what the chief stated that we had a long day's march before we could reach Kinta Balia, which subsequently proved to be twenty miles distant, with no town or fakai in between. We thought that the previous day's journey had been laborious, but it was as nothing compared to this day's work, for the country was even more mountainous, and the enormous quantity of granite boulders over the surface of the ground was positively bewildering, but withal a marvellous sight.

After having travelled for five hours and a half we were thankful to halt for our morning meal under tall trees of exquisite foliage by the side of a stream, over whose rocky bed ran water of crystal clearness, which was indeed most acceptable. We could not, however, afford to remain here long,—forty-three minutes was the time we stopped. Going on we came to a beautiful waterfall about fifty feet wide. At the top it ran over a gentle slope of level granite in death-like silence, until it fell over in a deep cascade to the broad rocky stream beneath with a deafening roar, churning the

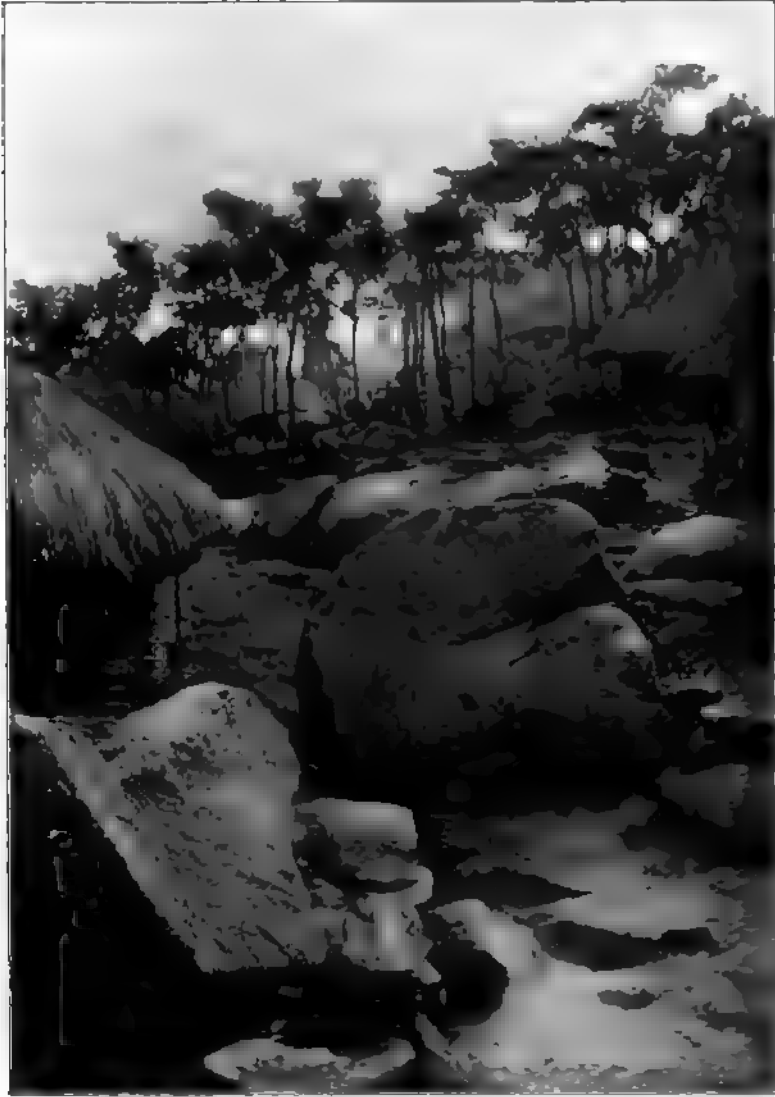


water up into a mass of foam. The peacefulness of the upper water gliding along so softly under the intense quiet of the majestic trees contrasted very strikingly with the infuriated pool beneath.

On and on we went, until getting out of the forest six minutes later we struck a big road, crossed a stream and descended a steep incline to a barricade. Passing through we went by a long rocky slope leading to another barricade, which took us to a fenced-in narrow lane, very rocky and very steep, which led to a third barricade. This we also passed ; scrambled over large granite boulders to another lane, cut through dense bush for about a hundred yards up the hill, which brought us to a fenced-in section about thirty yards long.

We went up this rocky gradient to a further fenced-in section about seventy yards long, gradually decreasing in width from ten feet to five, which brought us to the last barricade and gate leading into the town of **Kinta Balia** that we reached at 2.47, after a most exhausting march of twenty miles.

Some idea will be formed of these granite boulders from Figure 72 ; even this town was built amongst the boulders, but these in the picture are small compared with the enormous blocks which we passed. This town, **Kinta Balia**, although upon a high hill, was only of low elevation in contrast to the mountain immediately alongside of it. The following morning at six o'clock the Governor, with his private secretary, myself, and sundry police and carriers, proceeded to explore this mountain ; it was very precipitous and densely wooded. We met with rubber vine in quantities, some of it being from three to four inches in diameter. I picked some flowers closely



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**Fig. 72.—TOWN OF KINTA, BALIA, KURANKO COUNTRY.  
Showing the Boulder-covered Ground.**



resembling lilies of the valley. The mighty boulders were lavishly strewn all over the mountain, and upon its summit was an unusually high large block of granite. By dint of great exertion and the assistance of several of the carriers, the Governor and myself succeeded in getting on to it.

We were then 3,050 feet above sea level, and although the country was enveloped in white mist, at one point we were enabled to get a considerable view, which disclosed very much higher mountains only a short distance away.

Having seen all that was to be seen at that elevation we retraced our steps. This was a very fatiguing climb, but it was well worth the exertion. We reached the town again about a quarter to nine, wet through with perspiration and thankful to get a bath and a change of clothing. At six o'clock in the evening a violent tornado accompanied by heavy rain and hailstones broke over the town. This is only the second time that I have seen hailstones in Africa in all my residence there. The other occasion occurred in Lower Sherbro many years ago, and curiously enough about the same time in the evening. Certainly those hailstones were phenomenal to me ; some that I measured were an inch and a quarter in length. The storm only lasted a few minutes, but long enough to cover the surface of the ground with hailstones.

The noise startled the people, who had never seen such a thing before.

When the storm ceased, I saw some of my boys rush out to pick up these white stones ; but eager as they were to seize them, it was as nothing at all compared with the quickness with which they dropped them. Some came running up to me saying " Massa, Massa, the debil dun

come!" However I was able to reassure them, and they then collected a quart jugful which provided me with some iced water, a luxury I had not known for a very long time.

At Kinta Balia we had expected to find mails awaiting us by special runners from Sierra Leone; we had also hoped to meet a supply of tinned provisions brought by the same means, but alas! there was nothing; which vividly brought to my mind that good and thoroughly sound old axiom, "Blessed is the man that expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed." How thoroughly appropriate it is, especially when travelling through the West African bush, we explorers know.

At 5.25 the next morning we took our departure, passing through the same sort of hilly country as on the day before. In three hours and a half we came to a barricade which took us to a town on a low hill. Huts were standing and in good condition, but not a soul was to be seen; the place was absolutely deserted. Whether the people had hidden themselves in the bush at our approach, or had cleared out altogether, there was no means of ascertaining.

/ We descended by another barricaded pass to a cold and dark forest. By and by we found ourselves going along the narrow ridge of a high hill; at the side was a fearful gorge that it made one giddy to look into. We were gazing down on to the tops of the enormous trees in this gorge when the depth of it even surprised my boys, one of whom said to me, "Massa, that nar bad place; spose we go down, they no able for find we again." And I thought there was a good deal of truth in what he said. Later on we got into a little space of open country with wild fig

trees dotted about, as if in an orchard, and all round were bracken ferns. But it is difficult to describe vegetation, because out here one runs so rapidly from one form into another. At one time it is all low grassy stuff; then you pass into a palm jungle; again into a dense forest, emerging perhaps into old rice fields, or thick shrubberies or tall scrub land. The strange part of the thing is, although the country is full of wild animals and game, it is quite the exception to meet with them. This may perhaps be accounted for from the noise made by the column going through these narrow passes, which alarms the creatures and enables them to get away into the bush; and as one is generally shut in, so to speak, by some kind of vegetation that obscures the view, there is no opportunity to follow anything up even where it is seen. Occasionally in grass land a few deer may be observed springing about; but when native sportsmen go out hunting they penetrate the bush and locate themselves in some likely spot for days together, putting down strong nets at the same time. In the Mendi country especially, huge leopard traps may be often met upon the main roads. These traps consist of an enclosure made of strong upright posts tied securely together by vines, and seven or eight feet long, by four or five feet wide, and about six feet deep.

There is a small entrance on one side, having a heavy slab door, which is raised and kept in position by a bowed cane, and upon the animal entering and seizing the bait, which is generally a live fowl, the spring is released, down comes the door, and the animal is entrapped, to be afterwards shot. After travelling for nineteen miles, at 1.15 we struck a running stream in a light forest, beside which we bivouacked for the night, this making the seventh time we had slept in

the bush. We were away by 4.20 the next morning, and as it was still dark, we had to travel by the light of lanterns and candles. This turned out to be a very long day's march ; we crossed the Bagweh river by a yenketti or hammock bridge, as we did the Bafin ; we also crossed the Talin river, but this was fordable. We still met with the granite boulders, and went through many more of the orchards of wild fig already mentioned. In the afternoon we met with numerous clumps of bamboo, and a great deal of the undergrowth was made up of bracken fern. At seven minutes past four coming to a pretty valley at the base of high hills, after having travelled eleven hours, and done twenty-two miles, we pulled up for the night, making the eighth bivouac in the open. On this day we had passed through one swamp, thirteen quagmires, crossed twenty-seven running streams, and three big rivers. We retired early to our impromptu huts, all being thoroughly worn out, and for myself I can say that I slept as soundly upon my dried foliage as if I had been upon the most luxurious bed, without mosquitoes, without sand flies, and with a delightfully cool air passing through my leafy bower.

The next day was Sunday ; we left the encampment at five o'clock, and after going for an hour and three quarters we came up to an affluent of the Rokel, called the Sehli river. This broad water we crossed by a very fine yenketti bridge, which had been placed in position the night before.

There is a good deal of mystery connected with these bridges ; this is the reason that night is selected for putting them up. In Figure 73 it will be noticed how wonderfully the long bridge is suspended. It is constructed entirely of long, coarsely interwoven rattan canes, the sides

being supported by extra long canes, depending from the high trees upon both sides of the river. The elevation at both ends is some 25 feet above the water, but drops in the centre to about 12 feet. It is hardly necessary to remark that the oscillation of this bridge and its elasticity were such as to entirely absorb one's undivided attention, while groping an exceedingly unsteady and fitful passage through this swinging and dangerous open-work structure. The bridge is a wonderful construction, and the idea must, I think, naturally present itself, that a people whose inventive genius has enabled them in their own simple and primitive way to produce such a piece of engineering work, with nothing but such materials as the bush can supply, must surely be capable of higher mechanical attainments, if modern instruction were given to them. In the foreground His Excellency, Sir Frederic Cardew, will be seen, attended by his orderly.

The whole of our column passed over this bridge without mishap. The only thing that refused to go over was a stray horse, which one of the men had found on the road. This creature strenuously objected, and no amount of persuasion would induce him to alter his views. He simply laid himself on the ground and defied us. Fortunately his owner arrived on the scene just as the last of the carriers was about to pass over, and so removed both the horse and the difficulty.

The time occupied in crossing the baggage and the people was an hour and a half, as only a few men were allowed on this bridge at one time. After having travelled in all eleven miles and a half this day, we arrived at the town of Koinu Dugu, the inhabitants of which were all Mandingos, and consequently Mohammedans. From this



town there was a distant view of the country, showing lofty mountains beyond. We remained here for the night, and passed the next day through Bainingoreh and Kaikoreh fakais to Tibaba Dugu, only nine miles' journey. Continuing the march the next morning at five o'clock, we forded a narrow stream with a rocky bed, and got on to a good level road, which took us to some farm clearings by the sides of lofty hills. By and by we scrambled over a treacherous-looking bamboo bridge. It was only about two feet wide, and twelve feet above the water; we, however, all got over safely and passed through three small fakais. The vegetation around being then lower, we got excellent views of the mountains that loomed up, and as they were approached, gradually showed their steep granite escarpments to be more or less devoid of vegetation. In the barren parts of these steeps this scintillating mineral glistened in the dazzling sun with beautiful effect.

At 12.25 we reached Falaba, a distance from Waima of 144½ miles, that had taken us twelve days to cover.

We had hoped that our missing mails and provisions would have met us here, but again we were disappointed. Falaba was a fine large town, open and clean, surrounded by picturesque hills. The people of this district are all Mohammedans, chiefly of the Mandingo tribe, a tall and splendid race of people. Their stately gait, flowing white gowns, and sandalled feet, together with their well-built houses, afforded a welcome contrast to some of the Upper Mendi people with their closely-packed towns.

Upon looking at Figure 74 the superior style of their houses will be at once noticed. A high open verandah is commonly adopted; the thatching is exceptionally thick, and kept in position against tornadoes and high winds by

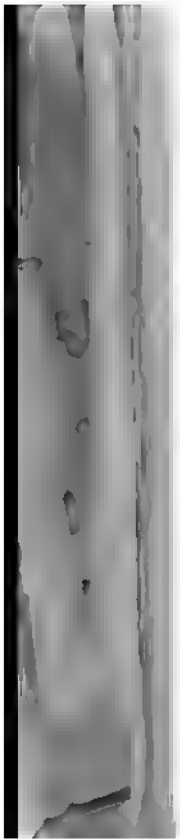


Fig. 73.—A YENKETTI BRIDGE OVER THE SEHLI RIVER, KOINADUGA.  
(His Excellency Sir F. Cardew, K.C.M.G., in the foreground.)



Fig. 74.—SINGERS ROUND THE TOWN DRUM, AT FALABA. (Page 288.)

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long thin sticks. Five ladies are seen standing round the tall town drum. This is the chief's drum, and may only be beaten by his command. It is used to call people in from neighbouring villages. Those standing round the drum are the singers of the town, who sang before us.

A large political meeting was held by the Governor in the afternoon of our arrival, when about three hundred people attended, a great many of whom were carrying long flint-lock guns. These were all Mandingos, several of whom had brought their musical instruments with them. This instrument is known as the balenjeh, or African piano. It is about three feet long, and consists of some fifteen short pieces of wood, mounted over small hollow gourds, the whole set in a frame and played like a dulcimer, with two small sticks with rubber knobs to them.

This is exclusively the Mandingo instrument and produces their national music. After the Governor's meeting there was a musical entertainment ; twelve musicians seated themselves on the ground in a line, and played together on their balenjehs.

The effect was very fine, as the tones produced are soft and melodious. Generally the musicians wear over the backs of their hands a small piece of skin or leather to which are fastened hollow iron cylinders ; to these again are attached little rings, and as the hands work the strikers, these jingling irons make a pleasant tinkling sound which harmonises well with the music. I had never previously seen so many of these instruments played together.

Most of the more important chiefs who attended this meeting rode upon horses. Horses live very well in this district, although at Sierra Leone it is impossible to keep them alive for any time.

Falaba was the most northern point of this tour, and when we left on May 3rd, we began the return journey to Freetown by a circuitous route to the south-west through unexplored country. We did that day a sixteen mile march along fairly level roads, as we worked along the valleys, and had very little to do with ascending hills, although they were all round.

It was quite a treat to be amongst human beings again, after our journeying through depopulated Konno. We were accompanied by two chiefs on horseback, and by many of their wives and people, including war-boys, so forming a lengthy cavalcade. On the way we passed over the Monke river by a narrow bamboo trestle bridge, none too secure, raised about twenty-five feet over the running water. After only travelling for five hours and twenty minutes we covered sixteen miles. This was first class going at the rate of three miles an hour, and at 10.35 we arrived at the town of Sinkunia.

Sinkunia was a picturesque and open town with high hills near. The sight of the cattle grazing recalled many a pretty scene of pastoral English landscape.

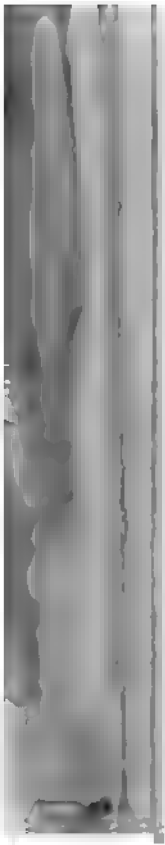
How thankful we were that we had completely left behind us the country of granite boulders! From Sinkunia we had a very pleasant little journey of five miles along excellent valley roads to the pretty little town of Mosaia. The Mandingo women here had quite a new style of dressing their heads. It will be seen from Figure 76 that the wool was drawn up in a tuft to the left, and passed through a circular piece of konk shell. This ornament is called kolona.

The next day we did a fourteen mile march to the town of Bafodia in the Warra Warra Limba country. This was



FIG. 75.—SINKUNJA, DEMBELLA COUNTRY.

*10 June page 290.*



a large town and full of people. This day's travelling was also very pleasant ; we were still marching between lofty hills of bare granite, although now and again we had to make an ascent. There was one terrible gorge of great depth into which we looked down from a narrow ridge, afterwards passing the base of a lofty and very beautiful hill.

On the arrival of the Governor, the town of Bafodia was soon *en fête*. Horsemen were riding about, a great number of men carried long flint-iock guns ; several at a time would rush into the large open space in the centre of the town, place the stocks against their half turned bodies, and fire off their guns in the ecstasy of their delight, dancing and running back to reload. After this play had gone on for some time we were treated to an exhibition of sword feats by some of the warriors ; the whole performance concluding with the usual dancing by the men to the music of small drums, which they beat with the end of a curved stick, and which were carried under the left arm as I have already said.

From Bafodia we were diverging from the main road to Freetown which is by way of the Bumban hills, and we were working round to the great Scarcies river, first having to cross the small Scarcies.

~~W~~ At Bafodia on Sunday the 6th May at a quarter past in the morning. We had a very fatiguing day, accomplishing the longest march of that tour, twenty-three miles in fourteen hours, including stoppages of forty-four minutes.

We passed only two towns on the road. The approaches to towns in this country were usually through long, deep and narrow cuttings, that would have been tunnels had they been



covered. At the end of these damp cold cuttings which had dense bush on either side, there would probably be barricades to be passed ; beyond which again in some instances were banana groves, whence by a slight elevation the town was ultimately reached.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when the main body, with the Governor, arrived at the town of Karasa, but owing to the delays caused by my topographical work, I was overtaken by the darkness a little after six o'clock. It looked as if we were to be bushed for the night, as there was no one in my party who knew anything whatever about the country.

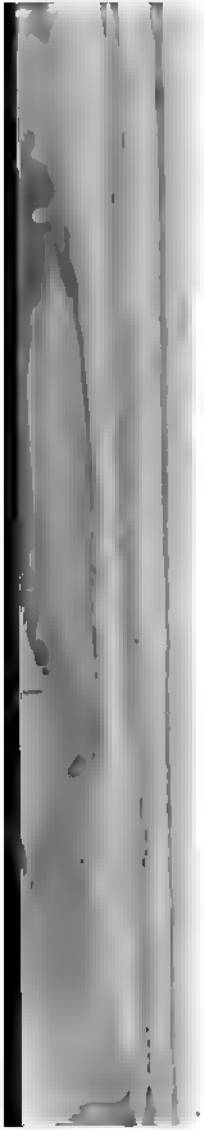
Fortunately for me, however, some time before a slave had come running up, and begged that he might follow me, which I had allowed him to do. He was acquainted with the route to this town of Karasa, and when the night set in it was so absolutely dark that I had to put this man in front of me, get him to hold one end of a stick while I with the other end followed as well as I could,—the boys all keeping near. In this way we groped for two solid hours, when we heard a great din at some little distance, by which we knew we were nearing the town. With the greatest difficulty we were struggling on when we saw lights coming towards us. The bearers of these lights met us at the top of a gorge, which it would have been utterly impossible for us to have seen without the lanterns. So we were probably saved from a serious disaster. With the help of the light, however, we managed to descend, only to enter a long narrow cutting in the earth, cold and dark.

This took us to a low hill which we ascended to find the town of Karasa on the top. I believe I was not in the



*(To face page 292.)*

**Fig. 76.—NATIVE HAIRDRESSING—WOMEN OF MOSAIA WEARING THE  
KOLONA." WARRA-WARRA, LIMBA COUNTRY.**



best of tempers when I reached that town, footsore and weary and anxious about the last part of the journey. I was only able to walk straight to the hut that had been selected for me, and, without waiting for any food, I threw myself on the mud bed and was soon fast asleep. We were still in the Warra Warra Limba country. During this march we had got into a belt of fan palms and locust trees. The foliage of the fan palms was exceedingly beautiful and afforded a welcome contrast to the oil palm of Mendi. The fan palm, apart from its fan-like leaves, may be distinguished by a peculiar bulging in the upper part of the stem. The locust trees provided good and portable food for the column.

Most of the boys might be seen with bundles of the long yellow pods, which they greatly appreciated, and so did I, for on the march one becomes accustomed to eating anything that comes to hand in the bush. I have frequently found myself gnawing at raw cassada with the greatest enjoyment, and it seemed too to be very satisfying; a handful of raw ground nuts or a piece of sugar-cane is always welcome.

We left Karasa at six o'clock the next morning and soon got on the hills again or into their deep gorges. This seemed to be a good palm country, for not only did we continually pass great quantities of fan palms, but the oil palm also. There were palm jungles, too, bracken ferns, hog grass, orchard trees, and rattan canes,—all were met with in turn. At 10.50 we struck the boundary line of the Limba Sehla country and continued until one o'clock, when we came into some very light and pretty deer grass, but saw no deer. After that we passed for some distance under beautiful interlacing foliage, a veritable Arcadia, the

charm of which was heightened by the red soil of the ground over which we walked.

Emerging from these lovely glades we almost immediately plunged into another of those cuttings peculiar to this part of the Colony, which led us to the usual barricade, passing through which we reached a fence where stood two enormous cotton trees of a size that overawed one, their raised and massive buttress roots radiating for twenty yards or more. Continuing by a narrow lane cut through thick shrub we entered the town of Katiri, in the Limba Sehla country. The column was divided into various sections which were called "Parties." These comprised the hammock men and carriers allotted to the staff. For instance, there was the Governor's party, the private secretary's party, my own party, and last, but by no means the least important, the "cow party." This last consisted of a few men who took care of the cattle and live stock generally, belonging to the expedition. Live stock was bought whenever any was met with, and was taken along with us. It was comical to see men carrying baskets of owls, leading on refractory goats and sheep, and driving the bullocks before them. I remember once, when we were ascending a steep mountain, hearing behind me a great snorting, puffing and blowing, and upon looking round to see the cause of it all I found it was the "cow party," and that the noise came from the bullocks who were pounding along for all they were worth. The rate at which they got over the ground was surprising. The "cow party" was always the first to leave in the morning and we would later on pick them up, when we would find the cattle grazing alongside the track and a score or so of fowls' heads on distended necks coming through the

meshes of the baskets in which they were carried. When there was no excitement going on in the town to keep the men awake they would go to sleep as early as they could ; for a country man can sleep anywhere and at any time, and so soundly that I have known them come to me in the morning and show me their fingers, the tips of which had been eaten by rats during the night without waking them.

We ourselves usually retired about nine o'clock, but on one particular evening the head man of the "cow party," or "partee" as they called it, suddenly woke up, and thinking that he had overslept himself and that it was time to start, rushed about the town yelling out, "Cow partee! Cow partee!" to get his men together. This noise aroused the town folk. One of the head men coming to me to ascertain the time seemed very greatly relieved that I had only just retired to rest, and that there was a good seven hours before the "cow partee" need start ; so he was able to put matters right. This, perhaps, would not have happened if we had had the means of sounding our customary reveille, but our bugler had gone with the officer of frontier police who had shortly before left our column by a cross road to take up his station at Falaba. We went on the next morning and did a short journey of nine miles to the town of Kamakwi. During the afternoon our long-looked-for mail arrived, which cheered us greatly, and although more than two months old was still most acceptable. Our travelling that day had been comfortable, as we had only had one hill to climb. We had passed through three small towns, and upon approaching one of them we saw that the people were engaged in cleaning the road. It seemed as if the whole community had turned out, men,

women, boys, girls, little children, and women carrying babies on their backs. They were all working together to the sound of a long wooden drum called *kerri*. The only implement they used was a small iron hoe attached to a short wooden haft. They had scarcely anything on, but they wore a great many fetish charms. The following day's travelling was a treat, as the road was clean for the greater part of the way and was fairly level. In four hours and a half we struck the Little Scarcies river, which was about 120 yards wide. Crossing it by a dug-out canoe, we ascended a small hill to the open town of Samaya in the Tambaka country, the day's march having been twelve miles. Here we were rejoiced to meet another mail. We remained the following day, and were regaled in the evening by a heavy tornado, which blew right into my hut, and as the doors consisted of merely coarse mats, they were soon sent flying in all directions.

The Governor having decided to visit Yana, a large Mohammedan town further inland, we diverted our course and started at 5.40 in a N.N.E. direction. After a couple of hours I was attacked by strong fever, no doubt the effect of the last night's blow; fortunately the level ground enabled me to use my canopied hammock, and, although suffering considerably, I was able to continue the journey of sixteen miles and a half to the large town of Yana, divided into several sections by mud walls. We approached this town in the usual way through a barricade that led to the customary narrow lane, cut through dense bush for a hundred yards or so, when we passed through another barricade about three feet thick. We then got inside the town of Yana, which was presided over by the Alimami Bolimodu. In these Mohammedan towns the smell of cattle pervades

the atmosphere, while in the Mendi towns cattle are generally conspicuous by their absence. By this time the fever was on me strong. I retired to my hut, took five grains of antipyrin, and was soon in a profuse perspiration, but quite unable to move; so, to my regret, I could not be present at the political meeting held by the Governor in the afternoon. During the night the fever subsided, and in the morning I had sufficiently recovered to be able to travel.

We started off at 6.15, and returned to Samaya, which we reached at 12.40, my fever being then better, but having left me very weak and shaky. The march was resumed the following morning at 5.30 by a W.N.W. course, along a good road through tufty grass, low shrubs, and orchards of wild figs interspersed by fan palms.

In fifty-five minutes we came to the Sara stream, which was the limit of the Tambakka country. After crossing that stream we entered the Tonko Limba country. Passing on, we came at 9.45 to the large town of Sassa, with a dirty stream outside sixty feet wide. Round the place was a mud wall ten feet high. We merely halted five minutes, and then passed on to the more important town of Kamasasa, which also had around it a mud wall, ten feet high and two feet thick, pierced for guns. This was a journey of thirteen miles and a half for the day, along a clean and level road all the way, and showing some very pretty grass land.

Leaving Kamasasa the next morning at 5.20 we retraced yesterday's march a short distance, and then struck out N.N.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$ E. along a narrow pathway cut through walls of dense tall foliage, from which we emerged into more orchard-like fields leading to open level grass land. This land was, however, in a very bad condition, and cut up into



irregular blocks of about two feet square, with a tuft or two of grass upon each. These blocks were separated by channels six inches wide. It was a curious sight, but made very bad ground to travel over. However, one can put up with much so long as the ground is fairly level.

A great deal of land was under cultivation, and it was a gratifying and refreshing sight to see such agricultural work as the planting of ground nuts and rice going on. Much land was also in the course of being cleared for farming purposes. We went on until we came to a waterway, which at this time was only twenty-five feet wide, and fordable. This was fortunate for us, as, although there was a high and narrow stick bridge, it was, of course, broken down and useless, as native bridges usually are. The water was just outside the large town of Kukuna, which had a mud wall fifteen inches thick around it, with several distinct compounds also separated by mud walls, having lanes between them. The houses were well and substantially built, and the town generally was laid out with a degree of taste such as hitherto we had not met with in this part of the country.

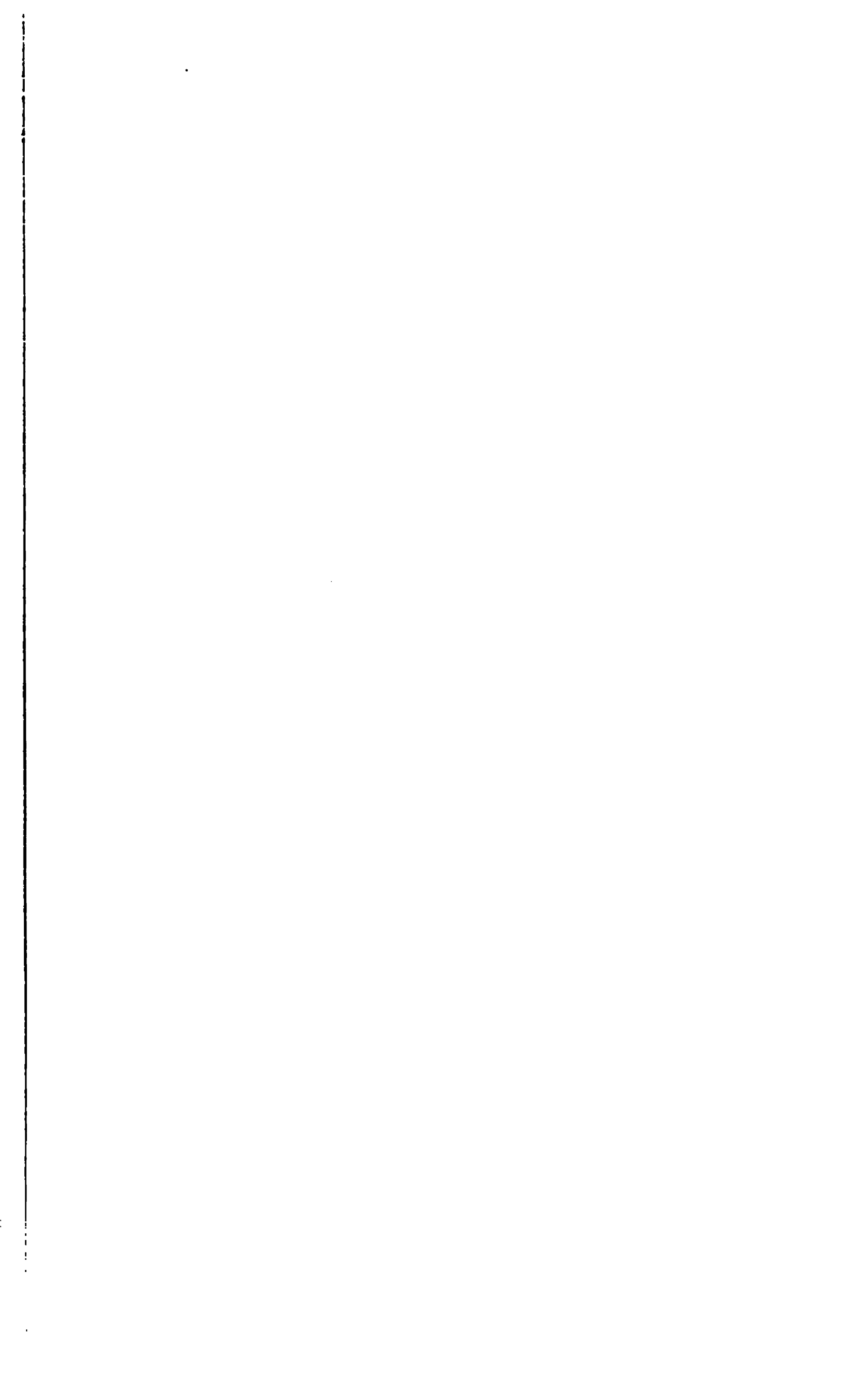
The chief of this town was the Alimami Bassi, who is sitting in the middle of Figure 77, in a white gown. In front of him sits his yele man, or musician, with his balenjeh, as Mandingo chiefs when visiting on special occasions are always accompanied by these musicians, who carry the balenjeh in front of them, suspended from the neck and resting against the body, so that the arms and hands are free to use the beating sticks. One great advantage of this instrument is that it can be played in any position, and whether the person is stationary or walking.

Mandingo men run very tall; it is indeed quite the



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Fig. 77.—THE CHIEF OF KUKUNA—ALIMAMI BASSI—SURROUNDED BY HIS PEOPLE (MOHAMMEDANS).  
TONKO LIMBA COUNTRY.



exception to find a short Mandingo ; their flowing robes and high close-fitting caps, which are country-made and frequently most elaborately embroidered in colours upon a white ground, tend to increase the effect of height.

In this picture will be seen several people wearing gree-gree charms hanging from their necks. The more enlightened Mohammedan carries his string of counting beads called the *tassa bea*. These beads are used at their prayers, and in ordinary calculations. Whatever the Mohammedan religion may be its tenets appear to be very strictly observed, at least outwardly, for I have seen a single follower of the Prophet at a large place where there was no other Mohammedan, go out at sunset into the most prominent position, and perform his evening devotions. In all places where there are Mohammedans their daily devotions are never omitted.

It will be noticed that two of the men are carrying umbrellas. Umbrellas would appear to be one of the first imported articles necessary to a native, irrespective of tribe, as soon as he comes into contact with the civilising trading establishments. Why an umbrella should be so fascinating has not yet clearly revealed itself to me, but it may be taken for granted that when umbrellas are seen as in this picture the town is not far from the coast-line, as they are not carried to the far interior. The journey to this town of Kukuna was only seven miles and a half. It was excellent travelling and very pleasant. We arrived at a quarter to nine in the morning, intending to remain the night, as the Governor was to hold a meeting which was convened for the afternoon, and which was largely attended by the Alimami and his people, everything passing off very satisfactorily. We were off the

next morning at a quarter to six ; a fourteen-mile march took us to the large town of Konku Bramaia, where we remained for the night.

On the way we had passed through the Mohammedan towns of Kaskundi, Tugikuri or palm-nut town, Bulung, Bramaia, Shekaiya, Sulimania, and Basia. All of these towns were built in a similar way, with the mud wall round them, the larger ones being divided into sections by other mud walls. We passed the Benna hills at a distance of about three miles, bearing then N.N.W., the upper sides of the hills appeared to be perfectly barren rock. The highest elevation I computed at a thousand feet. With this exception the country all about was very flat. The lofty oil palms now became very numerous, and the cultivation of rice, cassada, and ground nuts was actively carried on. We also went through many beautiful glades, and, as usual, crossed several broad streams. The whole of the country seems to be wonderfully well-watered ; but, of course, where bridges existed they were unavailable, as they were generally broken ; but as it was the dry season, we were able to wade through streams fifty feet wide. The next morning we started at a quarter past five and went W. by S. over sandy soil of flat grass land, with scattered trees and oil palms. We had passed through three small towns when we came to the Kankehna waterway ; fording this stream, we met two more small towns which took us to a long swamp, which we passed over by means of a good raised causeway made of hardened mud, supported on both sides by thick upright posts put closely together. On the other side of this swamp we came to the very extensive town of Kambia, upon the left bank of the Great Scarcies river. The chief

of this town was the Alikadi Kwaia Bubu, who received the Governor and his staff very courteously.

This journey was ten miles and a half, and, the road being most favourable, it was done at the rate of three miles an hour. As we went along we met a great many people who were working farms ; as soon as they saw us, dropping their hoes they ran towards us, and joining the cavalcade raced alongside the hammocks laughing and seemingly happy and delighted. Oil palms continued plentiful, and some of the journey was through the wild fig orchard to which I have often referred before. Kambia was an open place, long and straggling ; on entering we were soon surrounded and followed by a great concourse of the residents and trading strangers, many of the people being Sierra Leonians, who had established themselves there ; for Kambia is an important trading centre in connection with Freetown, which is only some sixty miles distant, and easily reached by water. Kambia, as I have just said, was on the Great Scarcies river. The colonial steamer was waiting at Robat, which was as far as a steamer even of shallow draught could penetrate this waterway. Kambia was reached at ten minutes to nine, and in three-quarters of an hour we left in the Governor's barge, together with other boats conveying the baggage and some of the people, to embark on the Colonial steamer some ten miles further down the river. The balance of the carriers went overland to that place, where they presently joined us. All having got safely on board, we steamed away at three o'clock, arriving at Freetown at midnight, after a river and sea journey of about sixty miles. With Kambia the Governor's overland tour ended. In fifty-two days we had covered 617 miles, giving an average of twelve

miles a day—including eight days halting—or fourteen miles a day of actual travelling. Here, then, was brought to a successful conclusion the first of that series of tours into the far interior, the inception of which was due to the far-sighted judgment of his Excellency Sir Frederic Cardew, K.C.M.G., whose name will be for ever associated with the Governmental policy for the expansion of the Colony of Sierra Leone.

In inaugurating this interior policy it had been intended to bring that large area, outside the Colony proper, which had hitherto been under the control of native chiefs and had been practically unexplored, within workable Governmental supervision. The consummation of the policy resulted, after the frontiers had been determined by the Anglo-French Boundary Commission, in the Hinterland of the Colony being proclaimed a Protectorate, and portioned out into the five districts of Karene, Koina Dugu, Ronietta, Panguma, and Bandajuma, each presided over by a European District Commissioner. The Protectorate Ordinance became law in 1896. It brought about great reforms in the removal of oppression; the administration of justice to the Hinterland folk and the abolition of slavery; and also gave great confidence to the people to work and develop the resources of their country. Naturally, by its introduction of moral principles, and the breaking up of many native customs repugnant to civilised ideas, it was distasteful to certain persons who had profited by the old state of things. To the masses of the people, however, that Protectorate Ordinance must have come as a release from the many forms of tyranny that had been their inheritance from time immemorial. Although earlier Governors had successively accomplished short journeys

that did not penetrate far inland, none had before reached anything approaching the great distance into the Hinterland accomplished in the tour just described. Governor Cardew, physically as hard as nails, was, by his magnificent constitution, exceptionally well fitted to undergo the strain and fatigue of such laborious travelling. Going through swamps or quagmires, ascending and descending hills and mountains, camping in the open, or sleeping in a mud hut or leafy recess, seemed matters of no consideration with him, and were cheerfully borne.

To natives and Europeans alike, both upon the coastline and in the interior, it was a splendid object lesson to see what the representative of the Government was willing to undergo in order to discover the best way of ameliorating by legislation the sufferings of the natives through tribal wars and the iniquitous traffic in human beings, and how to secure the peace of the Hinterland and the development of its natural resources. The good done by such a tour and its moral effect upon the people is incalculable. The amount of practical geographical knowledge of the Colony and Protectorate gained by the Governor himself must be most valuable. But what may be considered of even greater importance from the administrative point of view is the fact that he had seen and been seen by the treaty and paramount chiefs, their sub-chiefs, and their subjects. The chiefs have been made to realise that upon these tours they can personally bring before the Governor any important matter within their own spheres of influence, and have in all cases been so courteously treated that they have felt it to be an honour and privilege to confer with the representative of the British Government.

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE MENDI RISING IN 1898

MY remarks upon the Sherbro and its Hinterland would no doubt be considered incomplete were I not to refer, however briefly, to the discontent of the chiefs, which, in the end of April, 1898, culminated in a general rising and the massacre of a good many people, both white and black.

When this occurred there seemed to be a feeling prevailing in England and elsewhere that this rising was caused by the imposition of the house tax. Personally I was never of that opinion, and subsequent events have, I think, clearly shown that the insurrection was not to be attributed to that cause.

To my thinking, there is not the slightest doubt that for some years previous to the rising a very serious dissatisfaction had been growing in the minds of the chiefs; the beginning of which discontent was to be seen in 1893, when the transportation of slaves through the country was stopped. I had personal evidence, when I was far in the interior, of the effect that this police order had upon the chiefs; and it required a very great deal of tact and management upon my part to assuage, for the time being,

the feelings of some of the chiefs with reference to it. The first intimation of the order reached me through the police who were stationed up-country, and who had just received instructions. It was a very necessary and humane order, but a little embarrassing to me just then, coming at a time when I was endeavouring to bring down newly-made treaty chiefs to meet the Governor at Bandasuma ; but, of course, the traffic in human beings is too monstrous for discussion. I need, therefore, only say that the suppression of the slave trade was a matter that was absolutely necessary if peace was to be maintained. The first step to its abolition was the judicious prohibition of the overland transportation of slaves. To this cause I therefore attribute the very first ripple of those grievances which five years later resulted in a general rising and massacre, aggravated and inflamed by the mystical workings of the Mori fetish man. The chiefs were not slow to perceive that the further introduction of civilising laws for the welfare of the people by the Protectorate Ordinance greatly reduced their power and their hold over the people, entirely changing the native administration of the country, and completely abolishing all traffic in slaves. Upon this followed the Poro Ordinance, which broke down an old-time custom. This Poro Ordinance was well received by the people but not by the chiefs, as it took away the power they had of placing an embargo on the oil palms and other trees to prevent the gathering of the fruit at the proper season, which was not only a monstrous oppression, but greatly decreased the manufacture of palm oil, and consequently reduced the consumption of imported goods, which in its turn detrimentally affected the revenue of the Colony.

Upon the top of all this came the collection of the hut tax, which operated from the first of the year 1898 in three districts out of the five forming the Protectorate; and, so far as the Bandajuma district was concerned, a considerable sum had been collected when the rebellion broke out. The rebellion is attributed to the people of the Bompe country, but it is unreasonable to suppose that the war-boys from that distant place could have carried all before them in the massacre of civilised people, irrespective of colour or nationality, and the destruction of their property in the manner they succeeded in doing, had they not received help and encouragement from the chiefs and people throughout the entire country—both in the Protectorate and in the Colony.

In their ignorance of the extent of British power, the idea was conceived by some of the chiefs of putting an end to British rule over them. Their desire was to revert to their ancient practices, and no doubt, I think, can exist that they were very ably assisted and urged on in their wicked action by the fetish influence brought to bear on them by the itinerating Mori magicians. It is quite certain, I believe, that the rising did not represent the feelings of the people themselves; but I know for a fact that many towns which have come under my observation since were compelled by the sudden invasion of their town by a party of war-boys bringing the Yuirá Poro, or "one-word" medicine, which meant either they were to accept that Poro and join the rebels, or be killed. The result, of course, was that they were against their wills forced to join; although in some instances it has been conclusively proved, to the satisfaction of the Government, that the people of certain towns fled into the bush and did not

join the rebels, their towns being destroyed by the war-boys.

Some idea may be gathered of what the belief in fetish medicine is, when I state that during the massacre a notable chief, who was responsible for the murder of several persons, and who afterwards suffered the extreme penalty of the law, extended his protection to a certain English-speaking Christianised native at his town, his Mori man having first administered his country medicine, or "fetish swear," that this man would not divulge to the Government anything that he saw done there, telling him at the same time that he (the Mori man) alone was capable of removing the swear. Ultimately the man wrote privately to a friend of his, who showed me the letter, saying—"That he was not safe even for doing so according to the swear, but he took the risk, on the condition that if he and others with him were released, the Government would ask this Mori man to take out his poison from him, for no other Mori man, he had been told, could take it out," and concluded by saying that if he broke the agreement he must die.

Subsequently he and others were released. Now, I would ask, if a professing Christian could have such a belief in the deadly and mysterious power of this Mori man's fetish, what must be expected from the ignorant heathen whose very life is surrounded by superstition, when they are put under a similar fetish influence? I think that every allowance should be made for them.

The first intimation of actual trouble was brought to me about half-past one on Thursday morning, April 28th, by a European agent of one of the factories at Bonthe, who had heard disquieting news in connection with a small

factory that he had in the Jong river, which was near to Kambia, on the small Bum river, where the first fighting took place. Upon nearing Kambia, he had heard that his native agent in charge had been already killed and the place plundered. Returning he overtook a boat which was coming down to me to Bonthe with official letters from Lieut. C. B. Wallis (Scottish Rifles), the officer in command of the frontiers at Kambia. I found the boat had arrived at daylight with the letters and the dead body of a Sierra Leone man who had been seriously wounded and had died on the way down. The same morning a native head-man came in from a town on the Imperri side, saying "that the war-boys had crossed into Imperri, and that they were going on to Bogo," where the native Assistant District Commissioner, Mr. Hughes, and his wife resided, with his official staff and Civil police. This head-man stated that when the war-boys got to his town, the Kruba spoke to him, and asked if he could point out such a person, calling his own name. He put him off, and at once cleared away from the town, while search was being made for him. He was fortunate enough to get a small canoe, and came down to Bonthe and reported affairs.

In charge of the Assistant Colonial Surgeon, Dr. M. L. Jarrett, who volunteered for the duty, I sent a boat with five armed police and extra ammunition to the assistance of Mr. Hughes, and also to call in on the way at Momaligi to bring down the Rev. Mary Mullen, an American lady missionary who was stationed there alone, and who had only taken up her quarters a month previously, the house not being completed when she went into it. The boat returned at midnight without having been able to reach Bogo, but fortunately bringing down Miss Mullen with

only such things as she stood up in. Her escape was providential, for there is no doubt that she would have been murdered that same night.

After sending away the five armed men, I had but four rifles left and less than 500 rounds of ball ammunition. During the day excitement set in amongst the people, and it became so accentuated by the accounts which were continually being received from various traders in the different rivers reporting the presence of war-boys and the killing of people, that I felt it was my duty to specially engage a German steamer which had arrived in port the day before, and was then discharging cargo, to convey my despatch to the Governor, Sir Frederic Cardew, at Freetown, informing him of the state of affairs, and that the seat of government was threatened. The steamer left the same afternoon.

Owing to the isolation of Bonthe, I scarcely anticipated that the war would venture to cross the water, but reports of the wildest character kept arriving until a panic set in. I had just sat down to my dinner that evening, and was raising my first spoonful of soup to my mouth, when several of the town people rushed into the room in a fearfully excited condition, calling out that the war was coming, and asking to be supplied with guns. As I had no guns to give them, I tried to pacify them, and sent them to await me in the compound. I then went up to my room, loaded my two revolvers, and went to the police-station, which was just outside, to make arrangements for the defence. By this time the state of panic was complete. Men, women, and children bringing with them boxes, bedding, baskets, pots and pans, and, in fact, the most heterogeneous collection of things which had been hurriedly gathered up as they fled from their homes—flocked into the government compound,

until every available space in the police-station, the court hall above, the government offices, my own house and its verandahs, were completely packed with people and their belongings.

Altogether there must have been some 1,500 persons seeking refuge. In the sitting-room of my quarters alone were about seventy women and children lying about the floor. Native patrol parties were formed, who paraded the town at short intervals; but my difficulty was in not knowing whether we might not have some amongst us who were only waiting for the signal to rise up in rebellion.

The moon was young, so that much of the night was very dark, and at various distances separated by the water we could see the burning of houses and factories going on about us on the mainland, especially at Bendu, about five miles off. The night was a terribly anxious one, and seemed to be never ending; we did not know what might happen at any instant, or from which side the attack would be made; so there was no chance of any rest for me or for the police. When daylight came some of the people would venture to their homes, but so great was their excitement and fear that within a few minutes they would come rushing back, saying "that the war-boys were close by."

It was next reported that the Stipendiary Chief of Sherbro, named Beh Sherbro, whose residential town of Yonni was upon the same Sherbro Island, five miles away, intended attacking Bonthe that night. I therefore sent on to him to know if this was true, adding that he was to come on himself and see me.

He did not come, but he sent four of his head-men to inform me that, being unwell, he was unable to travel, but that he had sent the four men to deliver his message, which

was, "That he had no intention of attacking Bonthe, and that he had nothing whatever to do with the war; that he feared the war-boys would cross over to his town from Bendu opposite, as they had sent to say that they were coming 'to eat his breakfast,' and that he wanted protection himself."

As this was not at all in accordance with the tone of the meetings that had been held at his town before the outbreak, I was dissatisfied with his message. I therefore held three of his men as hostages, while I sent back the fourth to inform the chief, "That he was to come on himself the next day (Saturday), but under all circumstances, if he did so, I should allow him to return." During the day the Europeans from the factories came to me, asking what they were to do. I informed them, "That with the small number of police at my disposal, I should want all of them for defending the people, and that my quarters were open to all who chose to come."

That night they all came up to my place, and we had a more awful night than the previous one; for by this time the rebels were maddened for their work of bloodshed, plunder, and destruction. To make matters worse, about two o'clock in the morning a violent tornado broke over us, with thunder, lightning, and rain. Fortunately the morning arrived without attack; but the panic was getting worse, as we had not the faintest notion when any relief would come from Freetown.

About nine o'clock I received news that Captain Wallis was then at York Island, having succeeded in getting away from Kambia under cover of the night. This was most fortunate, as his ammunition was practically exhausted, and he and his men had determined when it was entirely



gone to fight to the finish in a room in the house they occupied, which was a small trading place. At the time of their escape, the hordes of war-boys were about to make the final attack, which, as I understood from him, was rather longer delayed than the previous attacks, owing to their quarrelling amongst themselves about some loot that they had got hold of, the noise of which dispute he could hear in the distance. He had fought these rebels for three days, with twenty-four Frontiers, the enemy numbering, as I understood, about 2,000. Fortunately he discovered a boat on the bank with only two oars, which were all he could find ; into this boat Captain Wallis and his party got, and took it by turns to row down to Sherbro, a distance of about twenty-five miles, arriving at Bonthe about half-past ten, having started the night before about seven o'clock, only to find the place in the state of panic that I have described ; and although his men were a welcome addition, still without ammunition they could not be of much use.

While talking to Captain Wallis the ss. *Gaboon* from Freetown unexpectedly hove in sight, and a welcome sight it was, as we hoped she would have brought us reinforcements and ammunition. Twenty Frontiers under an officer came up and a few men of the West African Regiment, and they brought me also a supply of ammunition for my own police.

That same afternoon the chief I had sent for, Beh Sherbro, arrived, and professed to be absolutely innocent of having any hand in the war, although it was well known that he was one of the prime movers, if not absolutely the head of it ; but he had not as yet personally taken any active part in the fighting.

The first stranger captured when landing from a canoe by the loyal watchers on the river bank, on the look-out for canoes, proved to be a messenger from the Imperri chiefs to Beh Sherbro to inquire from him when they should send the war-boys over to attack Bonthe. Of course this messenger never reached Yonni Town, as I detained him, and the Imperri chiefs did not see him again until he appeared as a witness against them in the police-court at the magisterial inquiry on the charge of murder. Having passed my word that at all hazards Beh Sherbro should go back, I allowed him to do so ; previously telling him that he would either go up to Freetown the next day by the *Gaboon*, to give any explanations he might wish to the Governor, or he would have to abide by the consequences, as I should proceed to deal with him. He promised to go to town ; came over the next day ; I had him sent on board, and subsequently he was deported from the Colony.

In introducing an incident which occurred during this night, it will be necessary to mention that the weekly government boat, which was a four-oared gig with sails, running between Bonthe and Lavana with the mails for the Upper Kittam, Sulima, and Mano Salija, had left upon its usual trip a few days before the rising. At that time there was not the faintest idea of any such thing occurring. The boat delivered its outward mails and received its return mails, preparatory to starting away from Lavana upon its journey back to Bonthe, a distance of about ninety miles. There was a sub-treasury at the port of Sulima ; the sub-accountant forwarded down, in charge of a police escort, revenue to the amount of £1,000, about £650 of this being in Bank of England notes and

the balance in British gold. It was a favourable opportunity to do so, because the sergeant of the police had just been relieved, and therefore accompanied the escort. The boat left Lavana with the mails, escort, and the money, the people being in ignorance of what was taking place in Lower Sherbro. The boat had to call in for return mails at Mopalma, in the Upper Kittam river, about four hours' journey from their starting-point. When a short distance from Mopalma a friend on the river bank called out to the coxswain to bring his boat ashore, which he did. He was then informed that war was all over the river; that the factories had all been plundered and destroyed; and that the postmaster, who was a young Manchester merchant, named Leech, and had only very recently started business there, had got away and that he knew where he was secreted. So they went together, and succeeded in finding Mr. Leech and getting him into the boat, which then resumed its journey.

There were some other passengers in the boat, altogether fifteen or sixteen persons, including two or three women. After leaving the Upper Kittam, and when passing the town of Teh, in the Lower Kittam, they were hailed from the shore and told to land, which they did not do, but continued their course. After a time they began to be chased by war-boys in canoes, until they found it necessary to run the boat ashore at Koronko, on Turner's Peninsula, from which they could reach the sea beach, which was only half a mile across the thickly-wooded sand-spit. They intended, if possible, to walk along the beach a distance of some forty miles to Bahol, at the Sea Bar point of the Peninsula, where they trusted to be able to get canoes to cross them over to Sherbro Island. The boat was sub-

sequently hauled up in the bush and chopped about by the rebels. The little party had not got far along the beach when they began to be harassed by the war-boys. Weary and foot-sore, they were compelled to throw away gradually as they went on such small bundles of their effects as they carried. The mail-bags were in charge of the coxswain, an old and faithful servant of the Government. He and his men clung to these bags, but after a time they also had to be left.

The party became so absolutely exhausted that some were unable to proceed, while others broke up into small sections. The sergeant of police was never heard of again ; whether he was killed by the people or died from exhaustion in the bush has never been revealed.

On this same Saturday at midnight two police appeared, and without saying a word placed on the table before me a small round bundle tied up in cloth. Then it was that upon my asking what the bundle contained and where they had come from, that I got the information that they were the escort who had brought down revenue and that the bundle contained £1,000. This was my first intimation of the troubles with the mail-boat and the mails. The next morning, the bundle still intact, I locked it away in the Treasury chest, mentioning in my despatch to the Governor, which went up to Freetown the same morning by the *Gaboon*, how this bundle had been received, and how it was utterly impossible with such a panic existing that anything could then be said about the contents, as, of course, all mails being lost I was without any official communication. I notified the Governor in this way in case of unfavourable eventualities, as at that time it was quite impossible to foresee what disasters might overtake us.

A few days later I was enabled to count this money, when I found the amount was quite correct, and it was then brought to account in the Treasury. I allude to this instance as one of the finest object-lessons which has come under my notice in regard to the honesty and integrity of our negro police. In the middle of all this trouble, beset by war-boys, and having to travel a great distance over the burning sandy beach, they resolutely stuck to their duty, and so wrapped up this bundle as to entirely delude the people as to the contents. Even when they got to the Sea Bar it was little short of marvellous how they succeeded in getting a canoe to cross them over, and when they did get over they had to walk several miles before they reached Bonthe. It was a magnificent piece of work, and must stand out to the honour of the Sierra Leone police for all time ; because had they been dishonest and taken advantage of the situation, destroyed the notes, and buried the gold to be unearthed at some future time, nothing could have been easier, and no blame could have been attached to them in a time of war. I am glad to say that their work was officially recognised by a gratuity to each of £5.

The next Sunday, about mid-day, the coxswain and one or two of the boatmen turned up, gave me his version, and said that Mr. Leech was dead, that they had looked after him, but that he had become so exhausted that he had begged them to secrete him in the bush and to come down and tell me what they had done ; but that after leaving him, they had heard, as they thought, a noise, and they concluded that Mr. Leech had been killed. The next morning, however, to my great astonishment I heard that Mr. Leech had arrived at Bonthe, and that after having

been left in the bush at his own request, these boatmen had, when they got to Bahol, met an English-speaking loyal native, who was a friend of Mr. Leech's. They explained to him where they had left Mr. Leech, and he said that he would under cover of darkness try to get him down safely. This he succeeded in doing, and Mr. Leech had a most fortunate escape.

The steamer left on her return to Freetown the next morning, Sunday, and about 400 persons went up by it. The exodus of such a large number of frightened people was a great relief to me, and I should have been pleased to see many more take their departure. The panic was still at its height, notwithstanding this decrease in the community. Native officials had taken up their quarters in the Government offices, and valuables were deposited with me by European merchants for safe keeping.

After the steamer had gone and the excitement was at fever-point, as I happened to turn round and look towards the anchorage, I noticed over the tall foliage of the mangrove trees fringing the river bank, topmasts moving along, by which I knew that some other steamer was coming in. Two minutes later its white bows silently glided past the lower foliage of the mangroves, and she came to an anchor in the channel, two miles from Bonthe, but in clear view of it. To our great joy she proved to be H.M.S. *Blonde*, Commander Peyton Hoskyns, M.V.O., C.M.G.

Through my glass I could see that the commander's steam pinnace was being got ready, and very soon I saw it ploughing its way through the water towards us. It was quickly alongside the Government pier, where I was waiting to receive Captain Hoskyns. His healthy and robust appearance and his jovial manner were more than

refreshing. He quickly jumped ashore and grasping my hand, said :

“ Well, now, what can I do for you ? ”

I explained the situation of affairs, which he at once took in, and I added :

“ I should be glad if you could land as many men as possible and as quickly as possible.”

With this he issued orders for the landing from the cruiser of some fifty bluejackets, who soon arrived at Bonthe, and upon getting on shore seemed thoroughly to enjoy it. They looked so delightfully healthy, so clean and trim, and were in such high spirits that it positively did one good to look at them. Bluejackets have a fascinating way of ingratiating themselves with the public peculiar to themselves : they are so nimble, good-humoured, and march with such life and energy, that their very appearance is reassuring to a panic-stricken people. The men were quartered in the Court hall, under the command of Lieut. Kemp and other officers, who, when not on duty, shared my quarters.

In the evening I was thoroughly tired out, having been up since half-past five on the previous Thursday till half-past seven this night, Sunday—eighty-six hours, without having been able to change my clothes, or take any rest.

The officer in command, seeing that I was worn out, suggested my going to bed. I was only too glad to do so ; I threw myself on my bed and slept soundly till the morning, when I got up quite refreshed.

We could get no news of the District Commissioner at Bandajuma, which was about four days' journey from Bonthe.

On the Tuesday the Colonial steamer arrived, bringing

up Lieut.-Colonel G. G. Cunningham (Derby Regiment), several officers, about 150 West India troops, and about 170 carriers. These troops were to proceed overland to the relief of Bandajuma.

H.M.S. *Alecto* also came in and anchored off the pier. The troops were landed and temporarily quartered at the Government Hospital, which was vacant, owing to the patients having been brought to the gaol-yard and located in the prisoners' open shed. This large shed had been transformed into an impromptu hospital within the Government compound. The carriers for safe keeping were also put into the open gaol-yard.

Suspected persons were being constantly brought in, and of course the prisoners had to be carefully watched also ; so some idea may be gathered of what this small gaol-yard looked like with all these people, and how incessantly it had to be guarded.

Small punitive expeditions were going on locally, and on Monday, May 9th, the advance guard of West India troops, under Major C. B. Morgan, D.S.O., left in eighteen boats towed by the launch of the *Blonde*, for the proposed base of their operations at Mattru, about thirty miles away on the Jong River. They did not succeed in reaching quite up to that place, but encamped near by at Pehpor. They were fired on by the rebels all the way along the river, and a European sergeant-major in one of the boats was shot through the head and killed instantly. This we heard when the boats returned the next evening.

The following morning I proceeded with Captain Hoskyns on a punitive expedition to the Bum Kittam river. We passed Bendu, which a few days previously was one of the prettiest places in the river, with a great number



of houses, chiefly occupied by Sierra Leone people. It had been entirely destroyed by the rebels; there was not a house but what was burnt, as was also the church.

Passing by Ronteh, Mosali, Mokate, and Tasso, all of which had been similarly treated by the war people, we came to the native towns along the river, where we landed and destroyed them. At the town of Mogumbo we were fired on; and at Gambia, close by, where there had been a large trading station belonging to a Sierra Leonian, nothing was left when we got there but some stone steps. There was a Wesleyan chapel near the factory at Mo-Moseley—this was absolutely destroyed, and amongst the burnt *débris* was the reading desk, which had escaped the flames. On our return when we reached Garinga, by the water side, which was a very large town, we found it had been put into a state of defence by the erection of stockades, and one cannon had been placed in position. This was fired at the launch in which were Captain Hoskyns, myself and a gunner with a Maxim,—the boats of the officers and blue-jackets being towed by the launch.

The stockades of the town were formed of corrugated roofing which doubtless had been plundered from the Gambia factory. So after showing the townsfolk the effects of the Maxim, and treating them to sundry volleys from the boats, we landed and entered the stockade from the back, as there were only three sides to it; the rebels evidently leaving the back open, thinking that it was unnecessary to guard that part, as we should never survive to get round there. After burning the town we re-embarked at a quarter to five and continued our way towards Bonthe. At ten minutes to six, when passing Ronteh again, where there was a large cotton tree with

gigantic buttresses, we were fired at from behind the tree, a bullet whizzing past us. The Maxim was at once turned on and a party of us landed, but we could see no war-boys, merely blood on the ground.

We took to the boats again, my boat being then in the rear, as I purposed detaching it from the flotilla when off Bendu, that I might return to Bonthe, while Captain Hoskyns and his men proceeded to the cruiser, which was lying off York Island.

The following Friday morning at 10.30 Colonel Cunningham left with the main body of troops by a flotilla consisting of twenty boats under oars to the *Blonde*, and thence were towed by the steam launch to the base of operations.

Captain Hoskyns informed me the next afternoon upon his return that the troops had arrived safely without any casualties. Several cannon had been taken from the enemy, who fired on the party all the way up. On Monday 16th I accompanied Captain Hoskyns on another punitive expedition to the Bum Kittam. On this occasion we had two steam launches, the second one being that of the *Alecto*, in which was Captain Holmes, the commander of that gunboat—with a Maxim and rocket apparatus, and we had with us about eighty blue jackets and marines.

Upon getting up about twenty miles we came opposite to Yandahu, some of the people of which town I knew had a great deal to do with the war; and subsequent events showed that they had been guilty of great atrocities, for which some of them paid the extreme penalty. This town being up a creek, although visible, and the tide low, could not be reached by our boats; we therefore had to

land on the river bank in the slush and make a short *détour* through the bush, the ground of which was a thick quagmire, until we picked up the creek opposite to the town. We forded this creek and got into the town, which we found deserted. After burning it up we returned to the boats in the same way.

From Yandahu we went on to one of the most notorious towns, Nongoba Bullum, by name, which lay back about half a mile from the bank. A creek ran right by it, but as this had been purposely blocked by fallen trees, there was no passage through it for even a small boat. The men were landed on the river side, and after clambering up the embankment, which was about ten feet high, we marched across the half-mile of open space, until there was only the narrow stream between us and the town. There were no canoes upon our side, although there were some on the other; two of the Government boatmen under cover of the rifles swam across the water, which was about fifty yards wide, and lighted up the town. The wind being favourable, in a few moments there was a terrific conflagration.

We then got back to the boats, but as it was now past four o'clock, it was too late for us to proceed further up the river that day; so we turned round upon our homeward journey.

As the night set in, the young moon disclosed to us those dark clouds gathering over the land which betokened a tornado, and by the time we got off Bendu, and my boat was cast off for it to proceed with me to Bonthe,—a distance of about four miles or so—the darkness of those clouds had become intensified, until there was the sharp black line so familiar to all acquainted with approaching

tornadoes, foreshowing that furious wind and rain which was soon to break upon us.

My boat was propelled by four Krumen, and one of my old and tried coxswains was at the helm. I still hoped that we should reach Bonthe before the storm broke, but it was not to be ; presently there was for a few seconds that death-like stillness in the air which always precedes the sudden burst.

In this terrible silence the coxswain said softly :

‘ Massa, tornado dun fall.’

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when it struck us with all its fury, churning up the river into a boisterous sea. The forked lightning was indeed magnificent, but frightful to behold, and the thunder awful ; the rain came down in torrents, and I soon knew that my clothes were not only saturated, but that the water was running down my skin within them. We made very little way, and what we did make was the wrong way ; for the night was now so dark and the lightning so blinding, that it was somewhat of a wonder that our frail craft survived it at all. However, the water being low, we ran upon one of the numerous and extensive sandbanks with which the place abounded.

To be on a sandbank wet through and helpless at eleven o'clock at night in a tornado is not at all a position that one would select from choice. We were between mangrove islands. The men got out into the shallow water and tried to push the boat off ; this they did once or twice, but only to get on to another bank. The coxswain said he knew where the channel was, and that it was close by, if he could only get clear.

When it seemed as if we should have to remain there

until the tide came up, the search-light from the *Blonde* suddenly darted out and came right over us, and remained over us for some minutes. My position could not possibly have been known on board, but that light helped us while it lasted to find the right channel, and by the aid of the vivid and rapid lightning we were able to keep in the channel when we had once found it. I finally landed on the Government pier as twelve o'clock was striking, after a most unpleasant experience. The next morning at daylight the *Blonde* left for Freetown, Captain Hoskyns during his stay in Sherbro having done most excellent work in helping to quell the rebellion, for which I cannot be too thankful to him.

In the afternoon I went with Captain Holmes of the *Alecto* in his steam pinnace, in which a Maxim was mounted, to have a look at the town of Yonni, and to see how they were getting on there. I went ashore, spoke to the people, who all appeared to be in a good humour, and found things seemingly quiet. When about to get aboard again the head man stated that the fame of the Maxim had reached there, and begged that it might be fired to let the people hear it "talk," as it had been reported to them as being able to "talk" all the same as when they "dey plant Benni seed"—that is, very rapidly.

The amiable commander kindly obliged them, and had the gun fired for three or four seconds after we had regained the pinnace, which so surprised the good folk on the bank that the air was at once filled with a sound, as from one voice, signifying that their amazement was complete, and that they would for the future be content to hear the firing with the muzzle pointed well away from them.

H.M.S. *Thrush* arrived from Freetown on Friday after-

noon, May 20th, and the *Alecto* left for Freetown the following morning at 5 o'clock. On Tuesday, May 24th—Queen Victoria's birthday—the police were paraded in the afternoon, and the saluting of the colours took place in the presence of a large number of persons. The excitement and panic among the people continued, fluctuating in intensity according to the native rumours that were constantly being brought in, and giving me no rest.

Much uneasiness was caused, as it was reported to me that a woman had come in from Bahol to fetch her sister,—because, as she stated to the town folk, the war people were crossing and had sworn to come on to Bonthe. The excitement that this caused was so great that I proceeded in the steam launch of the *Thrush*, which had been kindly placed at my disposal by Captain Pochin, to Mania near the sea bar; and although the chief repudiated all knowledge of the incident, and said he would not allow any war-boys to cross from Bahol opposite, I thought it was better to have some token of his fidelity, as well as of that of the two towns Bamba and Wa close by; so I demanded six of the principal men to be held at Bonthe as hostages. They were readily given, and I detained them at Bonthe for some days.

York Island was in a great state of scare notwithstanding that the *Thrush* was lying off there, as it was reported that the war was to cross over from Bendu that night, and thence to go on to Bonthe. On my way back from the sea bar I steamed past Bendu to see if any war canoes were visible, but I could see none, and of course no attack was made. The smallest rumour of a warlike description brought in was immediately magnified and distorted until it struck absolute terror into the people. By

this time Major Morgan had returned from the military column at Mafweh, having been badly wounded in a night attack upon the Mendis, and was staying with me. As he got better in a few days we made up a small composite force of West India troops, civil police and frontiers, and went with them over to Bendu to have a look round, and to give the refugees and Bonthe people an opportunity of rooting up the growing cassada and other crops which was providing food for the war-boys. I also gave notice that such persons as could provide their own passages could accompany us. The result was that 300 persons in forty canoes and boats came with us.

Upon getting to Bendu we saw nothing of the enemy, although the war horns could be heard all round, and a gun was fired. Not a stick was standing of what had been until lately a large and picturesque town. After staying at Bendu sufficient time to allow the people to collect the cassada and anything else they could find, we all re-embarked and returned to Bonthe.

The next day mails arrived from the base of operations bringing letters from the District Commissioner at Bandajuma, informing me that after repeated attacks upon his station, in which the enemy had been always repulsed, the besieged station had been successfully relieved by the troops under Colonel Cunningham's command. This was the first news received for over a month, during which time the fate of all at Bandajuma was unknown. During the outbreak several of the native traders in endeavouring to get down the rivers with their wives and people were captured; the men brutally murdered, while the women and children were detained, put to work upon the farms, and looked upon for the time being as slaves.

The first thing done upon the capture of some of these Sierra Leone women was to compel them to discard their European dress and simply to tie a cloth round themselves, native fashion. Their long wool was cut off, bringing it down to the customary short growth of the low caste country woman.

It was stated to me that a great deal of the stuff that was looted was hurriedly buried about the country, and that when the war was over it was found that most of it had been entirely destroyed by insects. Probably this was the case, as little of it was to be seen about ; so that after all as regards the plunder it could have done the rebels very little good. It was generally considered by the ignorant people that white rule had been broken, and that they would very soon be allowed to revert to their old slave keeping customs. They were, however, very shortly disillusioned ; for, by the prompt measures taken by the Government to mete out punishment, a great many of these Sierra Leone captives succeeded in escaping and getting down to Bonthe. Harrowing indeed were the majority of the statements which they made before me ; and such of these refugees who wished to go to Freetown had free passages provided for them.

It was not until June 22nd, nearly two months after the rising started, that Bonthe began in some measure to become more settled. At that date a large number of the 3rd Battalion West India Regiment under Major Ryde was sent up from Freetown to be stationed for a time at Bonthe ; and while they were there, the Imperri country being still in a rebellious state, I submitted to the officer commanding the troops a series of five punitive expeditions for the subjection of that country, which were effectually carried out.



The first of these small expeditions, upon which I went myself, left on the 25th of July, in command of Captain J. A. Wellington, W. I. Regiment, as Major Ryde was down with fever. It consisted of 64 N.C.O.'s and men of the West India Regiment, 117 carriers, and 105 men forming the crews of thirteen boats which conveyed us from Bonthe to Bambaia, a distance of about twenty-five miles by water. We started at 7.40 A.M. with a favourable breeze, which never forsook us, and we arrived in six hours. I had already sent to the chief of this town, giving him an ultimatum—that if he would not by a certain day, come up and tender his unconditional submission, a punitive expedition would be the result. He was a notoriously bad character and did some terrible things, for which he was afterwards tried and hanged. The disregarding of the ultimatum caused the present expedition. I was informed that when we arrived at the waterside he had cleared out with the people before we could get into the town. Presently a few people returned, and it was evident that he was in hiding near; but to attempt to hunt for men in the African bush is waste of time, the bush being their natural stronghold.

I sent messages by the people, and had it loudly called out that if he would return to the town by 4 o'clock that I would not destroy the place, but that if he did not appear before me by that time it would be burnt. As he did not do so and I could get no information whatever, the straggling and outlying parts of the town were fired, and in the morning the town itself was destroyed.

When this man was ultimately brought to justice, it transpired in the evidence that he had a kind of miniature

Well of Cawnpore, into which the bodies of his victims were thrown after they had been butchered.

The boats were now sent back to Bonthe, to meet us in five days at the southern end of Imperri. The expedition went on through the country, destroying various towns, for it must be remembered that the chiefs of this country were amongst the worst, and had brutally murdered many people. I had purposely brought with me an English-speaking native who had seen the Assistant District Commissioner, Mr. Hughes, after he was captured and taken to Imperri town. Upon overhearing some women say "that to-morrow he himself would be caught," this native had fled into the bush, and from his hiding place was an unwilling witness to the massacre of Mr. Hughes. He was, therefore, able to conduct me to the spot where I found the bones of the murdered man, and other bones which I was informed were those of the Court messenger Beakambeh. I had the remains of Mr. Hughes collected, and brought them down with me to Bonthe in my boat. A few days afterwards they were interred with the greatest honours, the O.C. troops with several of his officers attending the funeral and kindly acceding to my request to allow fifty of his men to march in the melancholy cortège. Although I hunted about I was unable to discover the remains of Mrs. Hughes, who had also been murdered.

To return to Imperri town. After burning it we went on for five miles to Bogo, where Mr. and Mrs. Hughes had resided. This we found already destroyed; another mile brought us to the water-side, at a little place called Mobundu, which before the rising had been a trading factory. Here we found the boats awaiting us, and embarking about 4.35 proceeded on our journey back to Bonthe.

In a little over an hour we were passing the town of Momaligi. As it was late and we had far to go, I had not intended landing there, but seeing several people looking at us from the river bank, without signalling the boats ahead of us to return, I determined upon landing to see what was going on. The O.C., myself and those in my boat jumped ashore, the people in the meantime having cleared off, but firing a shot as they sped away through the intricacies of the huts in this rabbit-warren sort of town.

This being the place from which the Rev. Mary Mullen had been rescued, and knowing the site of the Mission House, I went to it, only to find that in all the town the Mission property was the only building that had been destroyed. It had been levelled to the ground by the rebels.

Miss Mary Mullen had certainly had a providential escape. Finding the town still in rebellion it was lighted up, and before we pushed off had ceased to exist. We then continued our way, and arrived at Bonthe at 10.30, after a most successful expedition. The Bandajuma punitive expedition returned on the 9th of July, Colonel Cunningham having brought that part of the country and the Bompe to submission.

At the end of August Bonthe was still in a state of unrest, the leading inhabitants reporting that the native villages or fakais at the back were harbouring a great many strangers, and that they feared that it was being done for some sinister purpose. I therefore visited these places with a strong force of police, and thoroughly examined the houses and the residents, which satisfied me that there was no truth in the report, and that it was only another of

those terrifying rumours which once started took strong hold of the people; especially was this the more clear as at this time we still had the large force of West India troops at Bonthe.

On the 28th of October Captain J. R. G. Hopkins, Suffolk Regiment, arrived from Freetown with 114 of the West African Regiment to relieve the West India troops, all of whom left the following week. On Friday, October 14th, the Colonial steamer came up with Deputy-Judge Bonner, the Acting Attorney-General, A. Hudson, B.L., and Mr. Watts, the Counsel for the defence, for the trial of the prisoners charged with murder in the rising. The Supreme Court was opened the following morning and continued sitting daily until the cases were completed, resulting in the extreme penalty of the law being carried out upon seventeen prisoners.

The Deputy-Judge then proceeded to Bandajuma to hold Supreme Court there. Upon his return he concluded the remaining cases at Bonthe, when two others were condemned and executed, many more having their sentences commuted to penal servitude for life.

A general amnesty was then proclaimed, and the people began to return to their places and rebuild.

In 1900 I went completely through the disaffected parts of the Sherbro district, and so rapid had been the work of the people in reconstructing their towns and villages, that unless one had known as a fact that the places had been demolished, one could hardly have believed that such destruction could have taken place. Not only this, but the exports of palm kernels from the port of Sherbro for the year following the rising were larger than they had been for some years before, reaching to 13,553 tons. The

shipments for 1900, when I left the coast in October, had every appearance of even exceeding that, and of establishing a record. In the Sherbro district the first collection of the new "house tax" began on the 1st October, 1900, and as an instance of the submission of the people, I had collected without the least difficulty £444 9s. 7d., about one-third of the whole sum, before I left for England on the 27th.

I must state that since the Rising the European merchants in Sherbro have frequently expressed to me their satisfaction with the increased business they were doing. The Sherbro has, since the outbreak, enjoyed the greatest prosperity; the people, I believe, fully recognise that they were deceived by those who incited them to rebellion; their faith in Mori fetish workings must have received a severe blow, and I should conceive it to be quite improbable that any recurrence of such an insurrection was at all likely to happen again. I am persuaded, as I have already stated, that the masses of the people were not against British rule, but that when coercion was brought to bear upon them through the Yuirá Poro they were compelled to yield.

From what I have personally seen I feel convinced that great regret is felt amongst some of the chiefs who were implicated, whom the amnesty has allowed to resume their positions; but it is still to me inconceivable how such a scheme for removing British power and all civilising influence could have been promulgated except by the medium of Mori fetish; for I do not believe that Mendi people were in themselves capable of conceiving such a diabolical and carefully prepared rebellion.

When chiefs surrendered unconditionally a great many

plundered effects were sent in, and my police station at Bonthe was more like an old marine store dealer's premises than well-kept Government quarters. It was piled up with every imaginable thing, from parts of destroyed churches down to chairs, clothing of every description, cooking pots, assorted crockery, boots, shoes, hats, clocks, tin boxes, wooden boxes, and a thousand and one other things, which were given up as they were claimed, either to the owners, or where the owners had been massacred or could not be found, to the next-of-kin who could recognise the things, and after some months the remnants were sold by public sale. Amongst other things, 70 sovereigns were given up to the Government, as plundered property, by wives of certain Imperri chiefs who were awaiting trial.

This expedition was followed, as I have stated, by four smaller punitive expeditions into the Imperri, which effectually reduced that country and left there a practical example of British power that will not soon be effaced from the memories of the West Coast people.

The best way, however, to prevent another similar rising, is to let it be known that we have near at hand a naval and a military force equal to coping with any emergency ; and to see that the people are fully and profitably employed by developing their native industries.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### POTENTIALITIES

MY first official vacation in the New Century has been mainly devoted to the compiling of this volume, in the hope that the important but little known district of the Sherbro and its Hinterland may perhaps by its means become more familiar to the British public. Should this hope be fulfilled nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see that familiarity leading to practical results ; as I feel that much may be done to raise the aborigines by encouraging their native industries and creating a market for them in England.

The Government during the past decade or so has opened up the entire Hinterland. The frontier has been definitely determined ; friendly treaties have been entered into with the paramount chiefs, their heirs and successors ; the disastrous tribal wars have been stopped ; the slave trade abolished, and the whole Hinterland proclaimed a Protectorate. Justice at length has been given to the people, whose interests are now safeguarded against that tyrannical oppression which hitherto had been their lot.

Now to those who from personal experience are capable of forming a practical opinion, this great and beneficent

work, accomplished by the Government in a comparatively short time, appears a series of gigantic reforms carried out in a wonderful manner. The masses of the people now highly appreciate their happy condition of to-day, and with gratitude contrast it with the perpetual state of uncertainty and unrest which had until recently prevailed from time immemorial.

Their industrial development should now follow.

It is true that a serious native outbreak occurred in April 1898; but I have endeavoured to show from my own personal intercourse with the people since that time, that the rebellion did not at all represent the feelings of the masses, but that in many instances they were subjected to the Yuirá Poro, which compelled their compliance.

I maintain that the people of any country who are enslaved by an absolute belief in the potency of fetish workings, and their medicinal infallibility, can never be independent agents; and as long as this unwavering faith in them continues, just so long will the country be liable to spasmodic and fanatical outbursts of some kind or other. Nor can this superstition be wondered at when we consider that for unnumbered centuries the country was in the hands of the chiefs, who in their turn were in the hands of the magicians. Governmental intervention and control are as yet quite recent, so that upon reflection it does not seem very extraordinary that chiefs, in their great ignorance and aided by fetish incantations, should have made a last and desperate stand before finally submitting to the introduction of British law, which was to break down and do away with their heathenish and to us repugnant old-time customs.

Some of these customs would be a disgrace to a British Protectorate and to our most cherished ideas of liberty



and right, and of course in these days could no longer be tolerated ; but they will die hard and slowly, and will take a great deal of killing.

In dealing with West Africa, I am referring chiefly to the interior tribes. We should, I think, allow our minds to fully recognise that recent events have clearly shown to the British Empire that the people of its Colonies, irrespective of colour, are of vital importance to its stability. We cannot afford to hold the inhabitants of any British Colony otherwise than in the closest friendship for Imperial reasons. Our people beyond the seas must become so mortised and dovetailed into the foundations of the Mother Country that a common and permanent loyalty may be produced in such a way as to form a solid fabric which it will be impossible to break down. The magnificent behaviour under British officers of West African troops in the very successful punitive operations on the Gold Coast last year, has abundantly proved the gallantry and the worth of our native soldiers. This removes at once the great obstacle which had hitherto embarrassed all previous military expeditions in Western Africa,—the necessity of bringing out European troops.

The people have always been used to war. It has now been definitely shown that under European leadership they make magnificent fighting men, both fearless and amenable to discipline. Here is a fine opening for the employment of a great number of men.

The first force under European control was the Colonial Frontier Police, organised in 1889 by Sir James Shaw Hay. This did splendid service, and was engaged in many actions. In 1898 it was determined to raise an Imperial Native Military Force, under the title "The West African

Regiment." This service is much liked. The men have a natural pride in their uniform and its smartness ; it suits their taste, and I have often stood up to admire them at their drill. There is evidently any amount of good fighting stuff among our natives ; and so far we have been able to depend upon their loyalty.

What I consider of vital importance to the natives is profitable employment in which all can participate. Old-time notions have to be eradicated and new ones built up. The easiest and most satisfactory way to do this and to make the people happy and contented is to provide the means of remunerative work. I do not find that people in any civilised country care to work for next to nothing, why then should the untutored African native be expected to do so ? But if he does not do so he is too often branded as a lazy and useless creature.

A great deal has been said about the scarcity of native labour ; but my own experience is that a sufficiency, and more than a sufficiency, can be obtained for the supply of the Sherbro and its Hinterland, when there is a prospect of its being fairly paid for.

The natives should also be encouraged to collect indigenous products and to cultivate their ground.

Apart from the articles at present exported, with the active co-operation of people in England, new markets for native produce might easily be established. A trade could be opened up for rubber, rice, raw cotton, and piassava ; also for bananas, pine-apples, mangoes and other fruits, that would mean employment for thousands of men, women and children, as well as advantage to the trader and the consumer. At the present time more than three-fourths of the shipments are made up of palm kernels and

palm oil; but there is no reason why, with fresh markets, all the articles just enumerated should not be exported from the present workable area, to say nothing of the remote regions that are still closed through want of transport.

And here it should be remembered that there is always the enormous indigenous wealth of the place to form a stable basis. In the case of the oil palm, for instance, the crops are practically never-ceasing. Palm nuts can be gathered three times a year. For the sake of comparison, place this by the side of any cultivated crop, such as the ground nuts of the Gambia Colony, which is subjected to the usual uncertainties of all planted crops, and it is at once obvious that the risks to which all such crops are liable are entirely absent from indigenous crops, and that there is no speculation as to whether the crops will be a failure or not. The indigenous productions of the Sherbro and its Hinterland are the present mainstay of the country. They are sufficient in themselves and require no planting; all that is needed are facilities to enable the people to utilise them to their fullest extent by providing a means whereby the present wasted produce may be brought down overland and turned to account. This would show at once a considerable increase in the exports and a proportionate addition to the revenue.

All raised crops should constitute an extremely valuable adjunct to the indigenous crops. They are not, however, cultivated to anything like the extent that they should be, owing, as I have endeavoured to show, to a lack of public encouragement and the want of profitable export markets. The great natural productions form a very solid foundation on which to build up this unique country, with the

assistance of cultivated crops of such articles as I have mentioned. Personally my faith in the capability of the Hinterland of Sherbro for expansion has been unwavering for many years. For a place of its area I do not know any country with such prolific natural resources and with so good a future before it.

Besides the natural products there are native industries waiting to be developed. What are more beautiful than the native-made cloths, to which I have alluded so often, of never ending wear and indelible colours produced from pure vegetable dyes? Yet no encouragement is offered to these people to manufacture them as a commercial industry for exportation. They are only used locally, and are, as I have stated, currency amongst the natives, some fetching in the country high prices. The creation of a market for the superior description of these cloths would be of incalculable service to the people. There would be the planting of the cotton seed, the picking, growing, spinning, and weaving; just imagine how many persons would be required for this one industry if carried out upon an extensive scale. The people are there and ready, will not you assist them to work? I want to fix the importance of native industries well in the minds of my readers, for it is to these, together with industrial training, that we have to look to raise up the people and the country. Many persons having the best intentions no doubt think, and conscientiously believe, that in contributing to missionary work they are doing all that is needed to regenerate the people of the country.

Missionary enterprise is a thing in itself; a most laudable and necessary work; but to my way of thinking, heathen people should first be approached through their

daily vocations. Let them feel that they are getting money or money's worth for their labours, and when they have seen the result of their toil, and realised that a bountiful Nature has supplied the material and looks after its production and reproduction, all tending to bring them such domestic comforts as they never knew in the still recent days of the slave trade, when they had to work for nothing, they will, I am satisfied, be far more ready to receive the teachings of the missionary than they would be without it.

I do not wish to pose as asking for anything bearing a semblance to charity. Small spasmodic pecuniary aid would not benefit my cause. I want to give a *quid pro quo*. My desire is to awaken an interest in this Sherbro country and its peoples and their industries ; and by obtaining co-operation to provide permanent and profitable employment to our willing workers in exchange for their productions and industries.

By the opening up of the country new wants have been revealed to these people. These wants are themselves the first signs of a desire for civilisation ; like the rest of the world they will work for what they want. Our part of the business should be to make markets for their work, and so drive in the thin edge of the wedge of civilisation, which should by and by produce results that would enable missionary work to be successively introduced and carried on.

So far as the Sherbro Hinterland is concerned it may be regarded as practically untouched by missionary exertions.

I am a great admirer of missionary efforts, often carried on under most difficult and trying circumstances and

surroundings ; but I believe primarily in showing to the people the need of individual work and of working to a paying end. With greater comforts about them, procured by their own labour, we may certainly hope that higher ends will be attained, and that the obstacles which encompass missionary enterprise and retard civilisation will be materially modified and more successful results obtained.

I have not yet mentioned COFFEE as a Sherbro product ; I will now lay special stress upon it.

I returned to England at the moment when the daily papers were full of complaints about coffee, which, it was stated, is not as much drunk here as it used to be, presumably from the high price at which it is retailed, and the difficulty of getting it good. Coffee has been cultivated in the Sherbro for some few years, and since the trees began to bear I have never had any difficulty in getting a good and fragrant cup ; although my Kru cook has nothing better than an ordinary frying pan to roast it in. I pay sixpence a pound for the berry ; but I am informed by planters that they cannot obtain fourpence a pound, in the regular way of business ; and since I have been home I have heard from one planter that all he could get for his last lot was twopence halfpenny, which simply meant ruination. I have not tasted finer coffee since I have been in England, although I have to pay a very different price for it here.

I should be very sorry to see the Sherbro coffee going out of cultivation for want of a profitable market, as was the case with ground nuts about twenty years ago. Now, in Sherbro, if you want ground nuts you must buy them from a French Colony through a local French firm. This

style of doing business appears to me distinctly suicidal. It is possible to cut down prices a little too low and so kill your trade outright; this was so with ground nuts; I should much regret if it were the case with coffee.

Coffee is an article that thrives well and can be extensively cultivated, the soil being admirably adapted for it. Some years ago, when the market price in England was more than double what it is to-day, the wealthier class of educated native people took up coffee cultivation as an industry, in the hope of making it profitable and of giving employment to numerous native labourers, and they expended much money in clearing land and in planting. Things were working smoothly and satisfactorily, and it looked as if coffee-growing would prove an acceptable addition to the agricultural pursuits of the country.

It takes three years or more before the trees bear and their products become available for commercial purposes.

The market price of West African coffee at this time was about 70s. a cwt.; but the last few years it has decreased until it is now a good deal less than half that figure. The duty on coffee in England is only 1½*d.* per lb. Perhaps this is worth the consideration of those in England who are interested in the temperance cause.

Philanthropy is not what is wanted; increased production over a greater area is the need.

With British law there must be employment for the people. Profitable work must take the place of raiding and fighting; but for work to be profitable markets must be found for it.

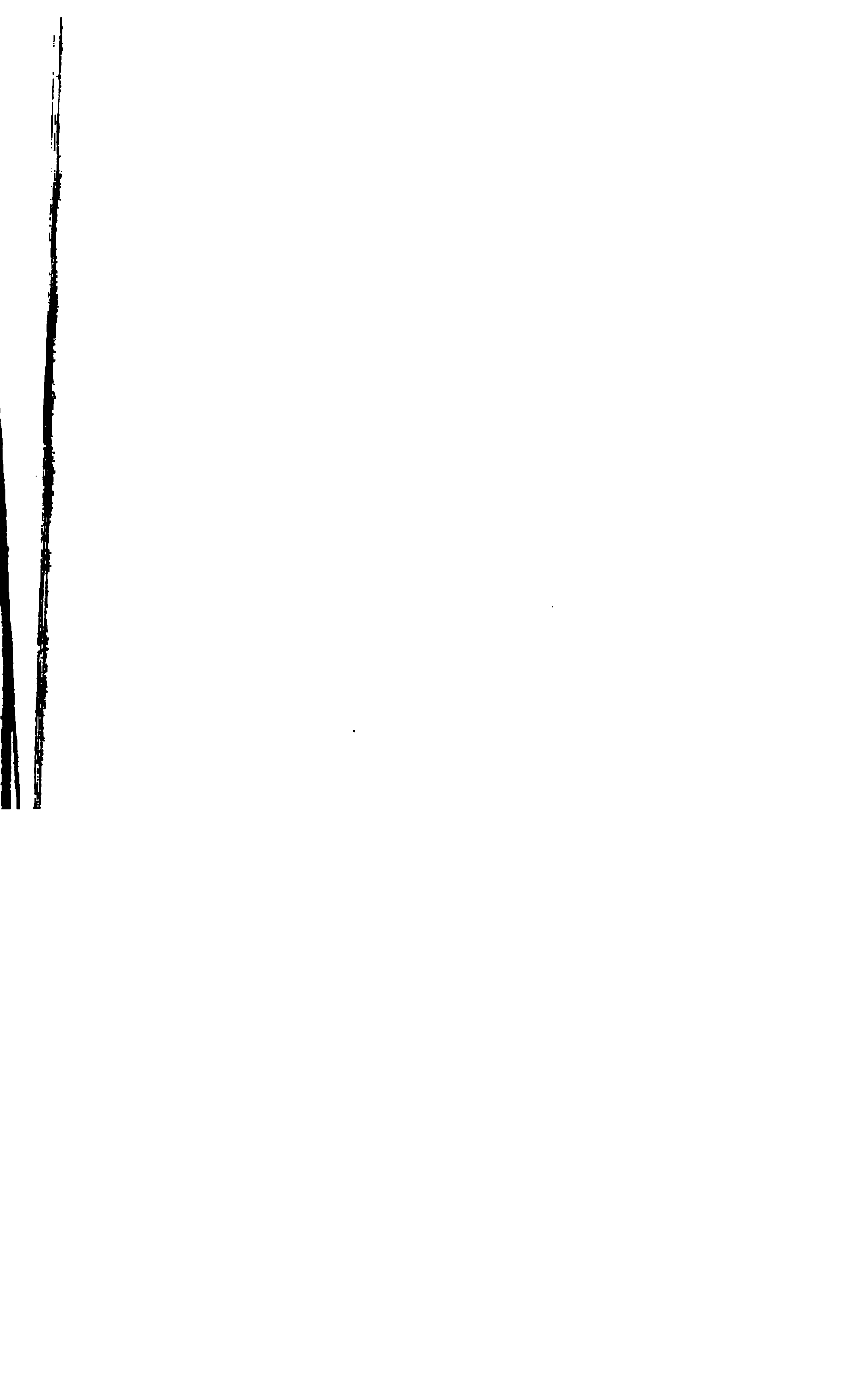
The time is perhaps within measurable distance when the large investing public will realise how much has been done by the Government, and will see that what now

remains is for the great mercantile world to turn to account the resources of the country.

There is now ample scope for the safe introduction of capital into the Protectorate. Formerly there was no means of recovering debts outside the Colony proper; to-day, under the Protectorate Ordinance, debts as well as crimes can be dealt with by the District Commissioner; there is consequently legal security for all property, whether European or native.

In conclusion, let me add that although the views I have tried to express in this volume may not meet with universal acceptance, such as they are, they are my own, and the result of over thirty years' connection with the Sherbro, and, an intimate acquaintance with the manners and customs of the up-country people obtained during my 6,000 miles of travel in the interior of **THE SHERBRO AND ITS HINTERLAND.**





## APPENDIX

### A STEP OUT OF BABEL

WHEN I first took up exploring, the difficulties I had to encounter in trying to catch the right pronunciation of native names seemed insuperable; for there were so many styles of speaking, so many contractions, and so many local and personal peculiarities, that it appeared next to impossible to get any name correctly. A strange tongue is confusing enough when you are with people who have a written language, of which you may gain some little idea from books; but, of course, in dealing with those who have no written language, confusion becomes, indeed, a veritable Babel. Your bewilderment is again increased when you have to write the names of men and of places that have never yet been written by any one before, as I often found to my cost before I made the acquaintance of the Royal Geographical Society's system of orthography for native names of places. This system, which may be easily mastered in half an hour, not only minimises orthographical difficulties, but enables the traveller, by the exercise of care and patience, to practically do away with them altogether, and to send home reports containing native names so written that they can be readily pronounced by any casual reader acquainted with the system. I have found this system of the greatest service to me; in fact, to its adoption I attribute a very great deal of my success with the natives, and more particularly with the chiefs, for if there is one thing more than another they appreciate, it is hearing the names of their illustrious selves and of their towns and villages properly pronounced. In this system the true sound of the word, as locally pronounced, is taken as the basis of spelling. In applying this

system the first thing, of course, is to arrive at "the true sound of the name." This is done by getting a native to pronounce it. Probably it will be unintelligible to begin with, being either a contraction, or pronounced in such a way as to be absolutely confusing, when the only plan will be to have it repeated again and again, until at last what is a clear sound is obtained. The sound once caught must without loss of time be written down phonetically according to the system, which fixes it and makes it intelligible to the brain through the eye, even before the tongue can manage it.

All you have to do is to keep on repeating it until you can speak it as nearly correctly as a European can. There are curious twists and gutturals, quite beyond the reach of most of us, that have to be given up. As it is absolutely fixed, should you happen to forget it, a reference to your note-book will bring it back to you in a moment. This phonetic system is most admirably simple. Once learnt you can apply it to any language ; and as it is now adopted by the Intelligence Divisions of the War Office, the Foreign and Colonial Offices, and in the Army and Navy, the names you fix in it are available for all the British services. My own experience of the system impels me to speak of it in the highest terms, and earnestly to press its use not only on the young explorer, but on all those who take any interest in works of travel. Missionaries, I am persuaded, would find it of the very greatest assistance in the compilation of vocabularies of unwritten languages spoken by the tribes of their particular localities ; while even in written languages transposition into this simple system would materially lessen the difficulties of pronunciation to those who have no colloquial knowledge of them.

That this invaluable system may be more widely known and adopted, I have received permission to include in this volume a copy of these rules received from the Royal Geographical Society.

## RULES

THE Rules referred to are as follows :—

1. No change is made in the orthography of foreign names in countries which use Roman letters : thus Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, &c., names will be spelt as by the respective nations.

2. Neither is change made in the spelling of such names in languages which are not written in Roman character as have become by long usage familiar to English readers: thus Calcutta, Cutch, Celebes, Mecca, &c., will be retained in their present form.

3. The true sound of the word as locally pronounced will be taken as the basis of the spelling.

4. An approximation, however, to the sound is alone aimed at. A system which would attempt to represent the more delicate inflexions of sound and accent would be so complicated as only to defeat itself. Those who desire a more accurate pronunciation of the written name must learn it on the spot by a study of local accent and peculiarities.

5. *The broad features of the system are:—*

- (a) That vowels are pronounced as in Italian and consonants as in English.
- (b) Every letter is pronounced, and no redundant letters are introduced. When two vowels come together, each one is sounded, though the result, when spoken quickly, is sometimes scarcely to be distinguished from a single sound, as in *ai, au, ei*.
- (c) Two accents only are used. (1) The acute, to denote the syllable on which stress is laid. The use of this accent is very important, as the sounds of many names are entirely altered by the misplacement of this "stress." (2) The sign *◌* with the vowel U, when followed by two different consonants, to indicate that the sound is short; as *Tūng*, pronounced as in the English word *tongue*.

6. Indian names are accepted as spelt in Hunter's Gazetteer of India, 1881.

7. In the case of native names in countries under the dominion of other European Powers, in whose maps, charts, &c., the spelling is given according to the system adopted by that Power, such orthography should be as a rule disregarded, and the names spelt according to the British system, in order that the

proper pronunciation may be approximately known. Exceptions should be in cases where the spelling has become by custom fixed, and occasionally it may be desirable to give both forms.

8. Generic geographical terms, *e.g.* those for island, river, mountain, &c., should be as a rule given in the native form. In the case of European countries, translation into English, where this has been the custom, should be retained, *e.g.* Cape Ortegál, not Cabo Ortegál, River Seine, not Fleuve Seine.

N.B.—On any printed map or MS. document, an explanatory table giving the English equivalents of the generic terms used, should of necessity be inserted.

The following amplification of these rules explains their application :—

Letters.	Pronunciation and Remarks.	Examples.
a	<i>ah</i> , <i>a</i> as in <i>father</i> . . . . .	Java, Banána, Somáli, Bari.
e	<i>eh</i> , <i>a</i> as in <i>fate</i> . . . . .	Tel-el-Kebír, Oléleh, Yezo, Medina, Levúka, Peru.
i	English <i>e</i> ; <i>i</i> as in <i>ravine</i> ; the sound of <i>ee</i> in <i>beet</i> . . . . . Thus, not <i>Feejee</i> , but	Fiji, Hindi.
o	<i>o</i> as in <i>mote</i> . . . . .	Tokyo.
u	long <i>u</i> as in <i>flute</i> ; the sound of <i>oo</i> in <i>boot</i> , <i>oo</i> or <i>ou</i> should never be employed for this sound . . . Thus, not <i>Zooloo</i> , but The shorter sound of the different vowels, when necessary to be indicated, can be expressed by doubling the consonant that follows. The sounds referred to are as follows :— The short <i>a</i> , as in <i>fatter</i> , as compared with the long <i>a</i> , as in <i>father</i> . . . The short <i>e</i> , as in <i>better</i> , as compared with the long <i>e</i> , as in <i>fate</i> . . . . . The short <i>i</i> , as in <i>sinner</i> , as compared with the long <i>i</i> , as in <i>ravine</i> . . . The short <i>o</i> , as in <i>sobbing</i> , as compared with the long <i>o</i> , as in <i>sober</i> The short <i>u</i> , as in <i>rubber</i> , as compared with the long <i>u</i> , as in <i>rubric</i> Doubling of a vowel is only necessary where there is a distinct repetition of the single sound.	Zulu, Sumatra.  Yarra, Tanna, Mecca, Jidda, Bonny.*  Nuulúa, Oosima.
ai	as in <i>aisle</i> , or English <i>i</i> as in <i>ice</i> . . . . .	Shanghai.
au	<i>ow</i> as in <i>how</i> . . Thus, not <i>Foochow</i> , but	Fuchau.

\* The *y* is retained as a terminal in this word under Rule 2 above. The word is given as a familiar example of the alteration in sound caused by the second consonant.

Letters.	Pronunciation and Remarks.	Examples.
ao	is slightly different from above . . . . .	Macao.
aw	when followed by a consonant or at the	
	end of a word, as in <i>law</i> . . . . .	Cawnpore.
ei	is the sound of the two Italian vowels, but	Beirút, Beilúl.
	is frequently slurred over, when it is	
	scarcely to be distinguished from <i>ei</i>	
	in the English <i>eight</i> or <i>ey</i> in the	
	English <i>they</i> .	
b	English <i>b</i> .	
	is always soft, but is so nearly the sound	Celébes.
	of <i>s</i> that it should be seldom used . .	
	If <i>Celébes</i> were not already recognised it	
	would be written <i>Selébes</i> .	
ch	is always soft as in <i>church</i> . . . . .	Chingchin.
d	English <i>d</i> .	
	English <i>f</i> . <i>ph</i> should not be used for	
	the sound of <i>f</i> .	
	Thus, not <i>Haiphong</i> , but	Haifong, Nafa.
g	is always hard (Soft <i>g</i> is given by <i>j</i> ) . .	Galápagos.
h	is always pronounced when inserted.	
hw	as in <i>what</i> ; better rendered by <i>hw</i> than	Hwang ho, Ngan hwei.
	by <i>wh</i> , or <i>h</i> followed by a vowel,	
	thus <i>Hwang ho</i> , not <i>Whang ho</i> , or	
	<i>Hoang ho</i> .	
	English <i>j</i> . <i>Dj</i> should never be put for	Japan, Jinchuen.
	this sound . . . . .	
k	English <i>k</i> . It should always be put for	Korea.
	the hard <i>c</i> . Thus, not <i>Corea</i> , but	Khan.
kh	The Oriental guttural . . . . .	Dagh, Ghazi.
gh	is another guttural, as in the Turkish .	
l		
m	} As in English.	
n		
ng	} has two separate sounds, the one hard as	
	in the English word <i>finger</i> , the other	
	as in <i>singer</i> . As these two sounds are	
	rarely employed in the same locality,	
	no attempt is made to distinguish	
	between them.	
p	As in English.	
ph	As in <i>loophole</i> . . . . .	Chemulpho, Mokpho.
th	stands both for its sound in <i>thing</i> , and as	Bethlehem.
	in <i>this</i> . The former is most common.	
q	should never be employed ; <i>qu</i> (in <i>quiver</i> )	
	is given as <i>kw</i> . . . . .	Kwangtung.
	When <i>qu</i> has the sound of <i>k</i> as in <i>quoit</i> ,	
	it should be given by <i>k</i> .	
r		
s		
sh	} As in English.	
t		
v		
w	. . . . .	Sawákin.
x		

Letters.	Pronunciation and Remarks.	Examples.
y	<p>is always a consonant, as in <i>yard</i>, and therefore should never be used as a terminal, <i>i</i> or <i>e</i> being substituted as the sound may require.</p> <p>Thus, not <i>Mikindány</i>, <i>wady</i>, but not <i>Kwaly</i>, but</p>	<p>Kikúyu.</p> <p>Mikindáni, wadi. Kwale.</p>
z	English z . . . . .	Zulu.
zh	<p>The French <i>j</i>, or <i>s</i> as in <i>treasure</i> . . . . .</p> <p>Accents should not generally be used, but where there is a very decided emphatic syllable or stress, which affects the sound of the word, it should be marked by an <i>acute</i> accent.</p>	<p>Muzhdaha.</p> <p>Tongatábu, Galápagos Paláwan, Saráwak.</p>

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